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POETICS OF RECEPTION: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL AESTHETICS OF BODIES AND TECHNOLOGY IN
PERFORMANCE



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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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This thesis is composed of my original work, and contains no material previously published or written by another person except where a reference has been made in the text. This thesis has not been previously submitted for a degree at this or any other institution.

ABSTRACT

This study examines the provocative claim by Performance Studies theorist Philip Auslander (1999) that there is no ontological distinction between live and mediated forms because they participate in the same cultural economy. This claim has led to something of a stagnation of debate between, on the one hand, scholars who privilege the live over the mediated and on the other those who extinguish the live in favour of mediation.

Moving beyond the limitations of ontology, this project proposes and develops a phenomenological aesthetics in order to investigate the essential structures and modes of experienced phenomena from within audience. The phenomenological approach understands the complexity and dynamism of the relationship between bodies and technologies in performance, reorienting the investigation away from a rehearsal of established and unhelpful ontological positions.

The methodology for the project draws primarily upon methods from the North-American tradition of practical phenomenology (Herbert Spiegelberg, Edward S. Casey, Don Ihde, and Anthony Steinbock), and the transcendental philosophy of Edmund Husserl. Through a series of specially designed workshops, in which audience participants are trained in phenomenological techniques of bracketing and attention, *A Poetics of Reception* tests the potential of practical phenomenology to break the ontological impasse set up by Auslander. The method elicits the grasping of experiences of embodiment, kinesthetic empathy, temporality, orientation, imagination and poetic language. Participants were trained and required to write their experiences of the interaction between bodies and performance technologies, creating texts that then underwent hermeneutic analysis.

The results of this interpretation yielded six interactive encounters, and revealed the constituted structures and modes of the relational phenomena experienced in performance by the participants.

This study's methodology has both practical and philosophical implications, including its proposed use as an audience-based dramaturgy for digital performance, and a method of inquiry into the kinesthetic dimensions of aesthetic experiences.

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In loving memory of my father James Eric McNeilly (1928-2010)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	3
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	4
TABLE OF CONTENTS	5
INTRODUCTION	7

SECTION 1: PROBLEM AND DEBATE

CHAPTER 1 THE LIVE AND MEDIATISED DEBATE	21
§1.1.1 Auslander's Claim	21
§1.1.2 Understanding Mass Media	29
§1.1.3 Remediation	33
§1.1.4 Receptivity and Immediacy	37
§1.1.5 Digital Performance in its Own Right	39

SECTION 2: REORIENTATION

CHAPTER 2 RESTORING ONTOLOGY IN THE LIVE AND MEDIATISED	
THE ROLE OF AUDIENCE	45
§2.2.1 What is Ontology?	47
§2.2.2 Ontology of Art and Audience	53
§2.2.3 Audience: Spectator-Analyst	63
CHAPTER 3 THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL GROUND	73
§2.3.1 Transcendental Phenomenology	73
§2.3.2 Phenomenological Aesthetics	81
§2.3.3 Genetic Phenomenology	84
CHAPTER 4 EMBODIMENT	100
§2.4.1 Phenomenological Concepts of Embodiment	102

§2.4.2	Body Schema and Proprioception	105
§2.4.3	Kinesthetic Empathy	114
§2.4.4	Movement & Kinesis	117
§2.4.5	Embodied Imaginings	121
§2.4.6	Writing Embodiment	128

SECTION 3: CONSTRUCTING

CHAPTER 5	PRACTICAL PHENOMENOLOGY	139
§3.5.1	Essentials of the Phenomenological Method	141
§3.5.2	Group Phenomenology	143
§3.5.3	Poetics of Reception Project	145
CHAPTER 6	PHENOMENOLOGICAL METHOD: A CASE OF ITERATIVE DESIGN	172
§3.6.1	Experimental Phenomenology: A Creative Practice?	174
§3.6.2	Case Studies for Phenomenology in Practice	176

SECTION 4: DISCOVERING

CHAPTER 7	POETICS OF RECEPTION: TEXTUAL ANALYSIS	216
§4.7.1	Textual Analysis: Procedure and Limits	217
§4.7.2	Interactive Encounters	226
§4.7.3	Constitutive Structures and Modes of Interactions ...	233
CONCLUDING REMARKS		291
BIBLIOGRAPHY		300
APPENDIX A		313

INTRODUCTION

The story of this research began in 2004 when I encountered the work of Philip Auslander in his book *Liveness: performance in a mediatised culture*. While reading this seminal text for performance studies, I became puzzled by his claim that *there is no ontological distinction between live and mediatised forms because they participate in the same cultural economy* (Auslander 1999, 5).

In 2006 I decided to problematise this claim, and had many questions to consider and conceptual clarifications to make. In my experience of attending dance performance, the corporeality of a breathing, perspiring performer's body, appeared (in my surface reception) to be constituted with great qualitative differences to their distributed two-dimensional projected image on a screen. To conflate a live thing with a mediatised thing just seemed counter-intuitive. Auslander's claim became categorically problematic, but an experientially and conceptually meaningful phrase to examine.

Initially I was interested in understanding what he meant by 'ontology' and an "ontological distinction" in the discipline of performance studies. I also wondered what these live and mediatised forms were, and for whom they were significant. It was also important to know who was claiming the distinction, and what notion of "cultural economy" Auslander was employing to abrogate ontological distinctions between these forms. Once I could answer these fundamental questions, I still needed to define a purpose for research beyond my affection for problems; and so the story develops.

The Debate

Auslander's position is a reactionary one. He challenges the claims of those who view liveness as necessarily and ontologically distinct from mediatised events. Proponents of liveness venerate the *live* in its ability to disappear, leaving "no visible trace afterward" (Phelan 1993, 149). Liveness, described as *original, authentic, immediate, and truthful*, is conceived as a place of political and ideological resistance in a capitalist cultural economy for the flesh and blood performer standing present with bonafide *presence*, sharing this moment with an equally live audience. In this view, live performance overcomes all forms of reproduction, repetition and distribution, which characterise the malevolent spawn of capitalist society that manifests in recorded performance. Even though the debate revolves around the question of political resistance and/or transgression in a capitalist cultural

economy, the claim in and of itself provokes a problem of experience rather than one regarding the efficacy of political art. In fact, for the discipline of performance studies, this debate has created an ongoing *aporia* about the relationship between liveness and mediatisation. In philosophy, an *aporia* is a difficult puzzle or irresolvable problem that creates ongoing doubt and confusion; it is an intellectual impasse. Is the live and mediatised debate an irresolvable *aporia*? It is certainly confused; and if deemed so, do we let it slip away as a difficult, unable to be negotiated moment in performance studies relatively young history? Performance studies scholars tend to yawn at the mention of it. But if we consider other disciplines, are the problems of the self in philosophy or identity in political science no longer motivations for research? My contention is that performance studies as a new discipline needs its own *aporias* to generate problem solving, new directions in thinking, and experimental methodologies in order to frame new discourse. The live and mediatised debate is indeed one of these. My overall point is that since this particular debate began in the late nineties, it has continued to be a foundational moment of scholarship within the discipline, and ready for other scholars to take up in their own way.

It seems that Auslander's motivation for challenging the valorisation of liveness is to combat theories of suspicion about technologies in an age of mediatic mayhem where communication technologies distally scatter our voices, faces and *hereness* to other destinations, or surveillance technologies watch our every move in public spaces in a dialectic of protection and perverse exposure. To quibble over whether corporeal bodies are the same as or different from two-dimensionally represented ones, or that live performance is at risk of disappearing, seems to be a path to pathological implosion. Because I am no agent of suspicion or a cyborgian fanatic, one of my motivations for examining bodies in relationship to technologies is to carve out a unique pathway from problem and debate, to reorientation, design and construction.

My position corresponds with that of Matthew Reason's, outlined in his book *Documentation, Disappearance and the Representation of Live Performance* (2006). We both concede the importance of the live and mediatised debate, but wish to see it recast in a more positive light through constructive approaches for understanding the relationship between technology and performance. Reason recognises the debate to be a "central motif in an important and ongoing dialogue within Performance Studies", but argues that it has proliferated into incontrovertibly entrenched sides since Auslander's attack on Phelan's metaphysical claims of presence and disappearance that are valued over the representational

and recorded (Reason 2006, 14). As a consequence, these aspects are never constructively developed outside of the debate. Reason's study of disappearance and documentation in performance manages to keep the debate in the background while not detracting from the experiential importance of liveness and mediatisation. Rather than perpetuating a politically charged scrap, Reason wishes to "explore, adopt and develop approaches and interpretive strategies that allow us to use these representations [recorded documentation] as an insightful and self-questioning form of knowledge and way of seeing" (Reason 2006, 4).

My first movement and delimitation in this research is to turn from problem to debate, then reorient to focus upon the *relationship between live and mediatised forms within dance technology events*.¹ In *Liveness*, Auslander argues that in performance there is only mediatisation: media is all-pervading. In sporting stadiums we watch bodies running around a field projected on to a large screen, while in the courtroom a corporeal body elsewhere and/or at another time provides a mediatised, televisual testimony. Implicit in all of Auslander's examples is a relationship between two forms, a relation of interaction. This prompts my next movement of delimitation in this reorientation: the collapse of the oppositional distinction (live *versus* mediatised) to form a *conjunction* between bodies and digital media (live *and* mediatised). In these events, the interactions of body and media may be live in the sense of an 'at the same time and place', but presented and received in different dimensions. Dimensionality is a significant structural theme in my study, and is a reorientation towards the relational. Interactions are diverse and many; they are relations becoming new relations and constitute an array of forms for experiential reflection. Throughout my research it quickly became apparent that 'liveness' is not only characteristic of three-dimensional breathing, sweating bodies able to be touched in the here and now, projected media can also breathe and be touched in the here and now. The spatio-temporal aspects of liveness in mediatisation are shown to be qualitatively and experientially different, but not distinct or divorced from each other. Taking this into account, the original distinction is terminologically reformulated to speak of events as *live, mediatised*. Viewing this whole business as a relational conjunction, rather than a conflation, or a more violent subsumption—as Auslander tends towards in his rejection of "the validity of *any* ontological definition of live performance"—I am able to consider the richly complex experiences of technology use within performance events (Auslander in Reason 2006, 15). My approach

¹ In Chapter 1, I refer to the relationship as live and mediatised. In my later formulations the relationship is termed 'bodies and media', and 'bodies and performance technologies'. The phenomena themselves never changed over the course of study; there was only a shift in terminology.

involves contemplating the variances of experience while seeking structural clarification about these shifting relations between bodies and media. Disoriented by the power play of concepts brought on by a fixed polemic, I reorient myself from problem to the design and construction of a method. I do this by focusing on the *relationship between bodies and digital technologies in live, mediated dance performances*.

Despite my strong critique of Auslander, I never venerate liveness, nor recapitulate stock arguments to salvage a fleshly presence from the fragmentation and simulations of a mediatic world. Influenced by contemporary theorists of digital art and performance practices I construct a framework for understanding the experiences of bodies interacting with new digital technologies. Understanding, here, is a transition from what Aristotle called *theoria*, (contemplation of a problem in and by itself without an end) to *praxis* (a process not devoid of contemplation, but with practical ends).

A third delimitation in my study is to focus upon dance performance, and more specifically, dance technology events. Although Susan Kozel, Johannes Birringer, Scott DeLahunta, Sita Popat, Susan Broadhurst, Carol Brown, Steve Dixon, *et al.*, wrote on the relationship between dance and technology in the 1990s and at the beginning of the new millennium, scholarship and publications on phenomenology, dance, and technology are rare. Three exceptions are Susan Kozel's book *Closer: performance, technologies, phenomenology* (2007), which has been a seminal text and point of reference throughout my research, and the two books on performance and technology co-edited by Susan Broadhurst and Josephine Machon, *Performance and Technology: Practices of Virtual Embodiment and Interactivity* (2006) and *Sensualities/Textualities and Technologies: writings of the body in 21st Century performance* (2009). In the area of phenomenology and dance Maxine Sheets-Johnstone's *The Primacy of Movement* (1999), and her earlier work *Illuminating Dance: Philosophical Explorations* (1984) have been invaluable resources for thinking about dance and movement in a phenomenological way, and these texts have also been inspirational in my own work.

Lately the emphasis on technology use within the field of dance studies has been in neuroscience. Mirror neurons—neurons that fire during a specific action and also during the watching of that same action performed by another—are a burgeoning area of interest for the dance scholar and choreographer alike, while dance and choreography have become activities of interest for the cognitive scientist. The discovery of mirror neurons seems to help us account for an experiential phenomenon like *kinesthetic empathy* in relation to watching dance performance: how we feel and “dance along even without moving overtly” when in an

audience (Foster 2010, 1).² Studying dance phenomena from within audience naturally makes kinesthetic empathy an important theme within my research, but like Susan Leigh Foster, I am suspicious of the idea that the cognitive sciences have adequately explained the experience of kinesthetic empathy. However, I do not trace an historical genealogy of the terms kinesthesia or empathy, as Foster does in her most recent publication *Choreographing Empathy: kinesthesia in performance* (2010), where she reveals the historical/culturally contingent nature of our conceptualising these phenomena. And I prefer to call on the vast phenomenological literature on embodiment to develop a framework for understanding these phenomena in performance events, including Edmund Husserl, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Gertrude Stein, Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, Shaun Gallagher, and Donn Welton. I also refrain from empirical studies of neurological processes and creative cognition in choreographic and audience research, and call upon classical humanist tools for engaging aesthetically with such events; tracing *aisthēsis*, movement and embodied imaginings through practical phenomenology and the written word. Rather than the referential glitter of firing “synaptic connections in the cortex” (Foster 2010, 1), rich poetic language represents experiential variations of the embodied connection between performer, audience, and interactive media in my research.

A further delimitation in my study that needs to be acknowledged is the concentration on the aesthetic in dance performance. I follow dance scholar Laurence Louppe, who uses an aesthetic approach in the study of contemporary dance. Her aesthetics is a poetics understood as “the thought of sensuous and emotional experience” (Louppe 2010, 6). If the gesture, affectivity and movement of dance is “the body’s poetry”, and the “deepest roots of the individual” are expressed through the dance itself, is it also not purposeful to engage with a poetics of language when describing aesthetic interactions that poetically form an artwork? (Louppe 2010, 5). Louppe argues that dance is “an expressive field that is still obscure and poorly explored by the science of aesthetics” (Louppe 2010, 5). My project answers this call by offering a style of aesthetics that engages the poetry of bodies in complex dances with new media. From *theoria* to *praxis*, my project (as Aristotle would see it) is also a *poiesis*.

² I do not wish to say that the term ‘kinesthetic empathy’ is or has always been a central concern for dance (as Susan Leigh Foster argues in her study), but the term is prominent in the contemporary literature on dance and has become common parlance in discussions about dance audiences. Critical of the concept, Graham McFee refutes kinesthetic empathy as being central to the meaning of dance on the basis that “kinaesthesia” itself is a “myth” (McFee 2011, 271).

The participants' phenomenological writings produced for textual analysis demonstrates this movement.

Finally, the history of material technologies, their invention, development, uses and impact, falls outside the scope of my study. I also do not provide an historical survey of perspectives in the philosophy of technology by tracing the thought of contemporary thinkers on the subject. To forge a new phenomenological path in studies of performance technologies in the twenty-first century, I do not view technology through a lens of suspicion, as one might following in the tradition of a Heideggerian meta-critique of the essence of technology. I follow Don Ihde in his suggestion that “[j]ust as technologies may become antiquated and abandoned, so . . . should “philosophies of technology” be seen to become antiquated and be abandoned!” (Ihde 2010, 13)

In Heidegger's essay of 1954 “*The Question Concerning Technology*”, the essence of technology is purported as non-technological. Technology draws man towards nature in a practical manner and also towards truth. Heidegger empowers technology with the capacity to reveal the truth (‘unconcealment’, *aletheia*) insisting that man is challenged forth to undertake technological activity (‘enframing’, *Ge-stell*), thus having no control over this process of unconcealment (Heidegger 1977, 323). Technology revealed as autonomous leads Heidegger (and many others in his wake) toward a dystopic view of technology as a set of forces that are out of control and unable to be “stopped”.

These forces, which everywhere and every minute claim, enchain, drag along, press and impose upon man under the *Gestalt* of technological installations and arrangements—these forces, since man has not made them, have moved along since beyond his will and have outgrown his capacity for decision (Heidegger in Ihde 2010, 19).³

Heidegger's view is problematic in its conflation of all forms of technology: all technologies are made the same because of their essence as non-technological. Don Ihde argues that this kind of essentialism ignores particularities and so robs technology of its contextual and cultural differences (Ihde 2010, 21). I extend this point to my own investigations of the essential structural relations between bodies and technologies in live, mediated performance. To conflate all technologies (say older analogue media with digital processing

³ When I add an emphasis using italics when citing quotes, I will indicate, *italics mine*. Otherwise all other emphases found in quotes (italics, underlining and bold) are from the original text cited. This occurs frequently in the translations of Husserl's and Heidegger's texts.

media) on the basis of their non-technological essence would entail a view of essentialism that is homogenous, static and lacking distinctions. This view is unlike the one I develop in my studies here. To forge my phenomenological path in studies of performance technologies, I prefer, like Ihde, to experientially understand through “concrete analysis” particular technologies in their use, sense formation and reception (Ihde 2010, 19).

A major reason for reorienting the debate and unmooring the oppositional lock between liveness and mediatisation is to do phenomenology. My reasons for choosing phenomenology as the approach with which to examine the relationship between bodies and digital technologies in live, mediatised dance performances go beyond a mere predilection for this philosophical perspective. As Paul Majkut suggests:

[t]he strength of phenomenology has been its concentration on the audience and the aesthetic experience, not content or aesthetic evaluation in terms of formal analyses of the object in its own terms (Majkut 2010, 201).

Phenomenology is a unique mode of study that inquires into the *constitution* of things as they appear in the world. Constitution is an account of how things in the world take on sense. In phenomenology, this appearance is the *givenness* of a thing. These things may be objects, mental acts, or—as this study concentrates upon—the givenness of a relation. My project attends to how the relations between bodies and media take on sense as constituted phenomena, and explores the processes of constituting: the structural dimensions of how we experience the experience.

In Section 1: Problem and Debate, and Section 2: Reorientation, I clear the ground for the development of my phenomenology. In Chapter 1, I closely examine Auslander’s main contentions offered in *Liveness* (1999), assessing both the logic of his argumentation and his appropriation of certain concepts. I critically consider his claims alongside specific disciplines that are concerned with bodies, technological media, performance and interaction, drawing from performance studies, philosophy, the history and theory of art, new media, and communications studies.

Before I move onto the process of *praxis* explained in Chapters 5 and 6, I challenge Auslander’s understanding of ontology in his approach to the live and mediatised debate. In Chapter 2, I ask the question: what is ontology? This is a question not simply answered in the space of a chapter, nor even a dissertation. But, delimited by my interest in performance and phenomenology, I feel I can begin quite late within the Western story of ontology with

Heidegger and his fundamental ontology where he asks the question: what is Being? Since I am examining a relation in representation, the question of Being, or the positing of *a priori* structures from outside experience, do not seem to support what essentially and methodologically appears to be a project of *phenomenological aesthetics*.⁴ But the primary issue for me in this dissertation is not Being, but understanding the aesthetic dimensions of experiencing an artwork. By the close of Chapter 2, the question, definitions and practice of aesthetics is more of an issue than the question of Being or ontology. *This leads me to* consult Hans-George Gadamer on aesthetics and reprise the role of reception in the tripartite structure of producer (artist), artwork, and receiver (spectator). Emphasising the role of the spectator through Gadamerian aesthetics, I follow current trends within performance and dance studies that highlight the importance of audience experience in the study of performance and aesthetic phenomena. Audience becomes pivotal.

The interaction between bodies and technologies triangulate with audience. By foregrounding audience receptivity, I examine mediatised performance events through a unique frame that differs from other traditional and contemporary approaches that critically appraise the relationship between machines and bodies, and the subsequent impact on (wo)man and world.

In Chapter 3, “The Phenomenological Ground”, I provide an exposition of Husserlian transcendental phenomenology, and look closely at some basic tenets of his philosophy drawn from the breadth of his translated manuscripts and published works, seeking assistance from leading scholars of his phenomenology to clarify particular concepts and procedures within his method that supports the design of my phenomenological framework. In Chapter 3, I specifically follow the thinking of Anthony J. Steinbock, with whom I had the honour of working closely across 2010-2011. I take up Steinbock’s identification of three methodological movements in Husserl: the static, genetic and generative. As such I understand my phenomenological approach in light of a static (constitutional) and genetic (self-temporalising) analysis. In this chapter, the theoretical background to my development of an original method for the study of performance forms can be seen.

In Chapter 4, I explore some of the seminal literature on embodiment within phenomenology, embodied cognition, and dance studies. Embodiment is a significant theme in this study, not merely because I attend to bodies moving, but because I am a body moving

⁴ For a survey of approaches in phenomenological aesthetics in a range of creative mediums see the *Handbook of Phenomenological Aesthetics* Sepp & Embree (2010).

amongst other bodies, and this triangulation within the experience affirms a-lot-of-body. Embodiment is a difficult area to merely motion towards in a pseudo-framing sense, such that I could say: “yes my study is embodied” “my procedures are embodied” and “I don’t think without my body—for God forbid that I be thought a dualist!” So, where to begin?

In sorting through what I acknowledge to be only a Western view of embodiment, I develop the conceptual relation *embodiment—embodied imaginings—writing embodiment* in order to attend to the bodily from every side: bodies kinaesthetically empathising and imagining with other bodies in their receptivity of stage bodies in two dimensions and three. The relation weaves in and out of the framework’s design, application and analysis. Embodiment is approached at the level of a transcendental aesthetic, but remains for the most part—as Maxine Sheets-Johnstone points out in criticism of and as a direct citation of Husserl writing on the body from his *Ideas II*—a “vague localization” (Sheets-Johnstone 1999, 120). I attempt, through somatic-based preparations for doing phenomenology, to register embodied experience as more than this “vague localization”.

For the remaining sections and chapters of this dissertation, I proceed with an explanation of the iterative development of the design, application and evaluation of my practical framework. When you are doing phenomenology there is, as Don Ihde attests, no explicit end (Ihde 1977, 193). While writing, practising, watching others practise, and reading as much as I could about *doing* phenomenology, I discovered just that, that there was no end. Husserl’s entire *oeuvre* is testament to the idea of phenomenology as an endless task.

On doing phenomenology, I took Edward S Casey at his word when he said: “[t]hose who can do phenomenology do it; those who can’t talk about it” (Casey 1997, 171). In my attempt to “do”, I looked to North America, specifically to the work of Herbert Spiegelberg, Edward S Casey and Don Ihde, and drew on experiences from my ongoing participation in the Phenomenology Research Group on the *Emotions Project* with Anthony J Steinbock (Southern Illinois 2008, 2010-11), and across the Pacific, my work with Stuart Grant on his project *Gathering to Witness: a phenomenology of audience* (Sydney 2004, Grant 2005). These experiences informed the development of my method for practising phenomenology in a performance context that is introduced in Section 3: Constructing. In Chapter 5, I outline both the background to practical and group phenomenology and the design of my framework for an applied phenomenology. The ‘relationship between bodies and media in live, mediated dance performances’ is the phenomenon, appositely, I have called my practice the *Poetics of Reception Project: phenomenological writings from within audience*.

The *Poetics of Reception Project* consists of a series of phenomenological workshops for teaching participants how to conduct a phenomenological reduction (the suspension or bracketing of presuppositions and judgments) and an attentional reduction (how to focus on selected phenomena) while attending and writing their experiences of a live, mediated dance event. The first pilot session of the *Poetics of Reception Project* commenced in 2007, and was followed by two group workshops, with each group consisting of four participants. The design, procedure and implementation of my project's framework are outlined in Chapter 5, where all documents provided to participants before and during the workshop are explained in detail.

Living in the southernmost part of Illinois for the final period of this project, I spent the transitional seasons (Spring to Summer, Autumn to Winter) on the turbulent edges of Tornado Alley. During my most distracted period, when I was gripped with *tornadophilia* (funnel cloud spotting!), I suddenly began to see the structure of a 'multivortex tornado' and its multiple funneling movements in the phenomenology that I was writing. Metaphorically it seemed that a number of smaller phenomenologies were taking place internally, propelling my bigger phenomenology. Graphically this is represented by the Peter Garfield image on the title page of this dissertation. As a result, my Chapter 6, "Phenomenological Method: a case of iterative design", documents these multi-internal turns in a series of case studies that are preparatory for my third workshop *Transmission Laboratories* and final stage analysis presented in my Section 4: Discovering. In Chapter 6, I also discuss the iterative nature of the *Poetics of Reception* method, along with its limitations, problems, refinements, and insights emerging from each instance of its application, and present two other case studies of performance and research where I was an observer, and which contribute to my eventual analysis of the *Poetics of Reception* studies.

The final stage of my project, presented in Chapter 7, involved the textual analysis of writings collected from participants during the workshops. These writings are a rich and poetic source of experiential engagement with the interactions between performing bodies and stage media. These texts were taken as instances of *imaginative variation*, a step within Husserl's procedure of eidetic analysis in phenomenological method. The eidetic reduction in Husserl is the distilling of the *eidōs* or essence, understood as the essential structure of a thing. Another formulation—and one that I prefer—is seeking *invariance* in *variation*. Indeed, variation takes on equal significance, for without it, the pursuit of invariance would be impossible. In strict Husserlian terms, to do an eidetic analysis is to do a style of ontology.

Ontology, taken as a noun, is the essential structure of a thing. By pursuing eidetic analysis, rather than presenting experiential variances as a range of loose descriptions, one could argue that ontology is at play in my project. But the scope of my work does not lend itself comfortably enough to affirm the practice of ontology. The relation between bodies and technologies changes dynamically in a representational context; as a result, my study could not exhaust all possible experiences and structures that this relation could elicit.

The phenomenon of this relation is an ongoing movement that makes it impossible to pin and preserve like a butterfly. I am revealing structures; Section 3 demonstrates this. But the grasping of essences in this phenomenology is a dynamic distillation of fast-moving structures within reception and expressed through a poetics. In this final section, I look to the actual experiences of selected performance events to distill the constitutive structures and varying modes of interactions. In my analysis nothing is imposed from outside of the experience other than the phenomenologist bringing a phenomenon to the fore and describing it. During this stage, explained in Chapter 7: Poetics of Reception: Textual Analysis, I identified six 'Interactive Encounters': (1) Digital Touch, (2) Dancing *with* Other, (3) Hybrids, (4) Transmorphing, (5) Environment and Other Worlds, and (6) Expressing the Inner. Interpretation plays its part, and so I played the hermeneut. Massaging language, concepts and meaning in a phenomenological way stirs the structures of relations co-constituted in and by themselves. Interpretation is a friendly decipherer of essences.

In Chapter 7, I also describe the process of disclosing eight co-constitutive structures and several modes of interaction. Many distinctions are made that elucidate, at a structural level, the dimensions of relational action, identity, presence, spatio-temporal dimensionality, orientation, the grammar of interactions, transcendence, the imagination and the moving empathetic body in reception. These insights deepen and clarify the relationship between bodies and performance technologies as experienced from within audience and understood with a phenomenological attitude. The role of audience in the sense formation of meaning is reaffirmed in several instances of triangulation with performer and media. My analysis reveals the phenomenon of kinesthetic empathy; I attend to those "firing synapses" as a synthesis of the temporal, spatial and linguistic in embodied perception.

Future Research

No final presentation in the flesh is ever reached in the mode of appearance as if it would present the complete, exhausted self of the object. Every appearance implies a *plus ultra* in the empty horizon . . . The empty pointing ahead acquires its corresponding fullness. It corresponds to the more or less rich prefigured possibilities; but since its nature is determinable indeterminacy, it also brings, together with the fulfillment, a closer determination (Husserl 2001, 48).

An empty pointing ahead; I steal this phrase from Husserl. More than an empty phrase, empty here means the potential to be full, a horizon full of possibility. My method developed and articulated in this dissertation points emptily ahead, and is the paradox of my ending. I did not set out to solve a problem. Instead, I made one from a spurious claim, that of Auslander, and then reoriented myself towards constructing a method to examine phenomena. From the design of a methodology and its practice, I open upon a new horizon and propose a working method for making performance: phenomenology as dramaturgy. I concur with Louppe's suggestion that

[t]he object of a poetics, like that of art itself, is at one and the same time knowledge, affect and action. But poetics also has a more particular mission: it does not only tell us what a work of art does to us, it teaches us how it is made (Louppe 2010, 4).

I believe my method, iterative by nature, has the potential for use within a performance design process because it reveals, at a deeper structural level, how something is made. At the very least the results from the phenomenology presented in the following pages promise such a beginning. Phenomenology as dramaturgy is analogical. Both are involved in the practice of revealing the internal structure of a thing, or things in relation. Phenomenology is happy to identify. Dramaturgy—avoiding claims to ontology—reconstitutes the structure elsewhere.

A second thread emerged from the results of my *Poetics of Reception Project*. It is a much larger thread that involves the examination of how we constitute scalar movements in kinesthetic encounters of the miniature and the monolithic. From my participants' writings of their encounters with tiny objects in performance, I came to speculate on the embodied significance of playing with objects or immersing oneself in spaces that are tiny or monolithic: experiences that shrink or expand our bodily senses in imagined movements of scale. My methodology offers an approach to inquire into such experiences, whether aesthetically based (objects, film or literary material), or in relation to how the very small,

tiny (toy trains, doll houses) and very big, *monolithic* (built environment, nature, our earth) impact upon our everyday spatio-temporal selves. Such a study could consider the phenomenon of how we constitute body image, and the implication of our eco-ecological relationship to others, world and the earth. As a future project, I am interested in developing this analysis at the level of a transcendental aesthetic, drawing together Husserl's manuscripts on self-temporalisation, imagination, image and the lived-moving body.

Phenomenology in Performance Studies

I hope that my reorientation from this problem and debate to the creation of a new method is recognised as a constructive approach to an important relationship we strike as audience members and practitioners: the relationship between bodies, performance technologies and the language of experience. For the most part, this dissertation should be read as a methodological contribution to the study of performance. It is a phenomenological aesthetics that engages with Husserlian transcendental methods and the practical phenomenology tradition developed through an embodied poetic approach. Phenomenology is surfacing as one preferred method amongst younger scholars in the study of bodies, movement, audience experience, space, temporality and place within performance studies. Tracing the rich, though scattered, history of the uses of phenomenology in the discipline has become the interest of scholars, particularly in Australia. Its uses in creative practice are on the increase, enriching critical discussion and deepening an understanding of performance elements. The methods of scholars and practitioners vary greatly. It can be said that there are as many phenomenologies as there are phenomenologists; here, I present but one approach.

SECTION 1

PROBLEM AND DEBATE

Philip Auslander's claim that "there is no ontological distinction between live and mediatised forms because they participate in the same cultural economy" is the point of departure for my phenomenological examination of bodies interacting with technological media in a performative context. Before establishing the ground and methods of this task, I will in the first part of this chapter address what I see as the main problems with Auslander's position, providing several arguments that point out his contradictions, narrow scope, and misappropriations of certain concepts borrowed from postmodern and media theory. This deconstructive phase will be followed by a survey of my preferred frameworks for understanding the relationship between bodies and media in performance that neither privilege the live or mediatised nor conflate them.

§1.1.1 AUSLANDER'S CLAIM

Auslander's position on the nature of liveness in a performance context is hinted at in the title of his book *Liveness: performance in a mediatised culture* (1999) and its suggestion that in performance, liveness is inextricably bound to technological media. In an earlier research paper "Against Ontology: Making Distinctions between the Live and the Mediatised" (1997a), Auslander argues that liveness itself originated with the emergence of technological media possessing the capacity to record. His claim implies that prior to recording media (i.e. television) there was no such thing as live performance, problematically begging the question: if not live, then what?

Through an examination of what may be called the ontological characteristics of live and mediatised performances...I will argue against intrinsic opposition and in favour of a view that emphasises the mutual dependence of the live and mediatised and that challenges the traditional assumption that the live precedes the mediatised (Auslander 1999, 11).

Nowhere in the literature does Auslander provide an alternative explanation of what performance was prior to the introduction of recording technologies. His position is based on the premise that liveness as a phenomenon only came into existence as a 'category of meaning' in relation to an opposing possibility: "mediatisation", identified as mediating

technologies with the capacity to record and reproduce (Auslander 1997a, 55). This purported historical argument is made on very weak theoretical grounds with Baudrillard's claim: "the very definition of the real is that of which it is possible to give an equivalent reproduction" (Baudrillard in Auslander 1997a, 55).⁵ A strong deconstructionist tone is evident in Auslander's idea; however it seems he grasps at the sense of the concept and manipulates it without explanation, consequently weakening his theoretical ground. But in turning to Derrida's notion of *differánce* (the foundational moment in deconstruction) we see that within language the difference between two terms is perceived from the perspective of one of the terms. One term only exists in relation to another term: deferring to and differing from (Derrida 1976). Deconstruction, observes Broadhurst, "does not engage in the annulment of neutralization of opposites; rather, it aims at foregrounding the asymmetrical nature of its object of inquiry" (Broadhurst 2007, 32). Auslander, by contrast, seeks the annihilation of liveness (as one of the terms) in the logic of opposing categories, loosely appropriating Baudrillard to support the claim that it is "not at all clear that live performance has a distinctive ontology" (Auslander 1997a, 55). However, in pronouncing the not-at-all-clear in

⁵ In *Liveness* Auslander admittedly appropriates the term mediatisation "somewhat loosely": "[m]ediatized performance is performance that is circulated on television, as audio or video recordings, and in other forms based in technologies of reproduction" (Auslander 1999, 5), and loosely follows Frederic Jameson's explanation of the term. For Jameson, mediatisation is a process or reflexive relationship between media within a mediatic system. Mediatic describes a synthesis of different media that does not produce a "superproduct or transcendental object—Gesamtkunstwerk" that the term 'mixed media' represents (Jameson 1991, 162).

[T]he traditional fine arts are mediatized: that is, they now come to consciousness of themselves as various media within a mediatic system in which their own internal productions also constitutes a symbolic message and the taking of a position on the status of the medium in question (Jameson 1991, 16).

It is not clear from *Liveness* how Auslander makes this parallel between "mediatic system" and "cultural economy" to qualify his use of the term mediatisation (Auslander 1999, 5). For my purposes, the term denotes the deliberate incursion of technology into performance events, and is somewhat influenced by Jameson's definition, which posits a dynamic relationship between media as they reflexively constitute themselves as the medium. Mediatisation has its theoretical roots in Jean Baudrillard's text *Simulacra and Simulation* (1983). Here Baudrillard challenges the notions of representation and reality amongst other Western so-called truths and beliefs including: the nature and truth of God; the objects and objectivity of science; the power of capital; the politics of deterrence; the immorality of morality; and more bleakly, the death of society (Baudrillard 1983, 1-79). In his chapter "The Precession of Simulacra", Baudrillard seductively shakes the foundations of Western thought with his invention of the simulacrum, defined as: not real, but not unreal. He provides an example to explain this paradox, using the distinction between someone who simulates illness, and someone who feigns or pretends to be ill. The simulator of illness will "produce in himself some of the symptoms"; whereas the feigning person will pretend some of the symptoms (Littre in Baudrillard 1983, 5). The feigning example leaves the reality of non-illness intact, the difference is always clear; non-illness is only masked. For Baudrillard, simulation threatens the difference between the 'true' and 'false' and the 'real' and 'imaginary' (Baudrillard 1983, 5). The relationship of truth to falsity, real to the imaginary, and representation to the represented is unhinged in his logic of simulation. As will be discussed here in my introduction, my study forms a conjunct between the interactive experiences of a corporeal body and technological media in many forms in order to overcome the opposition imposed between liveness and mediatisation. The terms bodies and media, or bodies and technologies will be interchanged throughout the remaining document.

respect to ontologically understanding live performance and its mutual dependence on media technologies, Auslander's approach fails to *make clear* the phenomenon he proposes to examine. Born from Baudrillard's questionable logic of opposing categories, his inquiry skates on the surface of understanding.⁶ At no point is there a rigorous experiential investigation of an actual event: Auslander never writes from within audience.

It is not the case that Auslander denies the presence of live things. Evie Sirloin, his dog, is in fact thanked for her "live presence" during the writing of *Liveness* (Auslander 1999, ix). Rather, his intention is the parochial extinguishment of liveness as an experience within performance—especially theatre, sporting events and rock concerts. In failing to consider audience accounts in his various case studies, Auslander provides me with the appropriate moment for developing a phenomenologically motivated, audience-centered study.

In *Liveness*, Auslander describes the relationship between live and mediated forms within the contexts of the sporting event, the rock concert and the courtroom (Auslander 1999). In these examples, the live bodies involved with kicking balls, singing, playing instruments and providing court testimony are recorded, projected onto large screens, amplified through speakers and made into televisual representations for later viewing. In his overall critique, Auslander opposes presuppositions that formulate an ontological distinction between liveness and mediation. For him the problem with an ontological view is that it operates on an *a priori* set of assumptions. He has no problem with making distinctions on the basis of experiences. This means that a phenomenological examination is possible, as long as it does not pose as ontology. However, the types of experiences he alludes to are already entangled within his presupposed concept of 'cultural economy'.⁷

⁶ When I use the term 'understanding', here and elsewhere, I do not mean in the more general sense 'to make comprehensible'. Rather, I invoke the traditional hermeneutic regard for *understanding*, which can be traced from Friedrich Schliermacher to Wilhelm Dilthey, through to Hans Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur. Gadamer considers Heidegger's description of the hermeneutical circle and how interpretive understanding is achieved, noting that:

[a] person who is trying to understand a text is always projecting. He projects a meaning for the text as a whole as soon as some initial meaning emerges in the text. Again, the initial meaning emerges only because he is reading the text with particular expectations in regard to a certain meaning. Working out this fore-projection, which is constantly revised in terms of what emerges as he penetrates into the meaning is, understanding what is there (Gadamer 2004, 269).

⁷ In his article "Against Ontology", Auslander qualifies his use of the term cultural economy. Cultural economy describes "a realm of inquiry that includes both the real economic relations among cultural forms and the relative degrees of cultural prestige and power enjoyed by different forms" (Auslander 1997a, 50).

In challenging the traditional opposition of the live and mediated, I am not suggesting that we cannot make phenomenological distinctions between respective experiences of live and mediated representations, distinctions concerning their respective positions within cultural economy, and ideological distinctions among performed representations in all media. What I am suggesting is that any distinctions need to derive from careful consideration of how the relationship between the live and mediated is articulated in particular cases, not from a set of assumptions that constructs the relation between live and mediated representations *a priori* as a relation of essential opposition (Auslander 1999, 54).

There are two points to be made from this paragraph. The first entails a contradiction: Auslander rejects ontological distinctions that are made from an *a priori* set of assumptions, but presupposes conditions upon liveness and mediation from a concept of cultural economy informed by postmodernist notions. Any phenomenological investigation that he suggests is possible only within the presupposed condition of this given cultural economy. The live and mediated are always already participating in a non-essentialist, historically contingent ground, and are prescribed by a set of conditions that conflates and/or subsumes them. These ideas rely on the assumption that before recording technologies we had no concept of the live; liveness as a phenomenon only came into existence as a ‘category of meaning’ in relation to an opposing possibility, mediation. Auslander is unable to convincingly weaken any claim to *a priori* assumptions, especially when his claim is always already presupposed by an even stronger set of assumptions.

Clearly Auslander does not refute the possibility of making phenomenological distinctions between live and mediated forms, yet a discussion of ‘how’ these particular cases are different is never attended to, thus forming my second point. It is never clear as to precisely what kind of phenomenology he proposes. He seems to suggest a “subjectivist-relative” approach with his interest in the relationship being articulated through particular cases. This is different to a Husserlian transcendental ‘back to the things themselves’ approach that inquires into the essential invariant structures of experience.⁸ Despite the promise of a phenomenological investigation of live and mediated forms, there is no explication of what could be an adequate method. In all likelihood, the loosely-described experiences would remain loosely-described experiences, leading us no closer to understanding the matters at hand. Husserl would politely redress this weak use of the term phenomenology:

⁸ Inquiring into the essential structures of things (or in my case a relation) is a different style of ontology than what Auslander posits ontology to be. This is to be discussed with more detail in Chapter 2.

[f]or without having seized upon the peculiar ownness of the transcendental attitude and having actually appropriated the pure phenomenological basis, one may of course use the word phenomenology; but one does not have the matter itself (Husserl 1989, 211).

As a final rejoinder to this point, Auslander's claim to distinct experiences as a further basis to challenge any ontological distinction forces him to appeal to a soft phenomenological approach, first in order to avoid essentialism, and second, to argue against ontology for methodologically creating this distinction. In order to show that there is no ontological distinction between these forms, Auslander would—in the very first instance—benefit from undertaking a transcendental phenomenology. When considering liveness, transcendental phenomenology would help argue toward the kind of evidence Auslander needs for his *de-ontology* program.⁹

A sustained transcendental phenomenology would offer a more rigorous and methodologically consistent path than the undeveloped deconstructive move Auslander makes in order to posit cultural economy. For instance, Auslander uses certain characteristics of recorded media to challenge the ontological value of liveness, thereby contradicting his position that live and mediatised forms possess no ontological characteristics. For example, Auslander rejects an essentialist thesis regarding the nature of *repetition* in mediatisation.

Repetition is not an 'essence in the medium' [for] 'the possibility of repetition is only a possibility'; the actual use of the medium is determined by the 'imaginary relation of viewer and tape. Repetition is not an ontological characteristic of either film or video that determines the experience that these media can provide, but a historically contingent effect of their culturally determined uses (Auslander 1997a, 54).

But foregrounding repetition as an "effect" (historical or otherwise), or as a "possibility" in the experience of mediatisation to refute evidence of a distinction, presupposes that mediatised forms have essential characteristics to help in this conceptual process of conflating forms and de-ontologising. Auslander argues that liveness (like mediatisation) is characterised by repetition and *reproduction* because live and mediatised forms are made

⁹ The use of the term 'de-ontology' in relation to Auslander issues from scholars commenting on his strategy to rid the ontological distinction that exists between live and mediatised forms, and is different to its usual meaning in the domain of ethics. See Giesekam (2007, 6). In its proper use, de-ontology is a normative theory "regarding which choices are morally required, forbidden, or permitted" (Alexander and Moore 2008). When I use the term de-ontology/de-ontologising it will be in relation to Auslander and his strategy for an anti-ontology/ontologising.

within the same cultural economy, and so possess the capacity to be repeated and reproduced. The live does not escape the forces of a capitalist cultural economy, as Peggy Phelan (1993) Patrice Pavis (1992), and other proponents of the live insist.

On Auslander's account, theatre has historically separated itself from other cultural forms on the basis that it was essentially an *original*, non-reproducible form. As a result, it could not participate in a contemporary cultural economy where the main currency of communication is in the mass media. To keep live performance as an active competitor in this war of cultural production—that is, to win its audiences back—Auslander argues that “the general response of live performance to the oppression and superiority of mediatised forms has been to become as much like them as possible” (Auslander 1999, 7). Interestingly Auslander's assessment of the relationship between the live and mediatised as not “determined by immutable differences”, relies heavily on a phenomenon of *difference in competition*. This competitive difference is read as a necessary motivation for live performance to become as much like mediatised forms as possible. He undertakes a historical examination of the relationship between theatre and the intentions of early television, and notes that a “consequent displacement of live performance by television” occurred in early broadcasting's attempt to be “theatrical” (Auslander 1999, 12). This was despite the well documented fact that cinema during the 20s and 30s depleted significant numbers of spectators attending live performance, a phenomenon well underway before television's first broadcasting period in the U.S from 1939 to 1945 (Auslander 1999, 14). Ironically, Auslander maintains that it was television's own modeling of its properties on theatre, rather than cinema, which ultimately “strangled its host by offering itself not as an extension of the theatrical experience but as an equivalent replacement for that experience” (Auslander 1999, 23). He argues that cinema lacked the immediacy and intimacy which theatre possessed. Film, as opposed to television, represented a “realm of memory, repetition and displacement” in its editing techniques and capacity for reproducibility in subsequent screenings (Auslander 1999, 15). The question of why a camera-bound medium such as television would not model itself on cinema and embrace theatre, which had already suffered a devastating cultural-economic blow from the emergence of cinema, is answered by Auslander with the following:

[t]elevision's *essence* was seen in its ability to transmit events as they occur, not in a filmic capacity to record events for later viewing (Auslander 1999, 12).

Again, Auslander in contradiction to his program of de-ontology and anti-essentialism posits the ontological premise that “television’s essential characteristics as a medium are *immediacy* and *intimacy*” (Auslander 1999, 15); more succinctly, he corroborates the essence of the televisual as immediate with: television “broadcast[s] events *exactly when and as they happen*” (Lohr in Auslander 1999, 15).

The History of Technology use in Performance

In *Liveness*, Auslander only engages with the older forms of media like film, television and radio in order to draw the link between television and theatre and comment on liveness in performance. It is beyond the scope of his earlier study to consider the different types of mediatised events and technologies we experience in performance today.¹⁰

The use of technology in the theatre can be traced back to the theatres of Greek antiquity (Baugh 2005).¹¹ Chris Salter points out that the Greek stage was a technologically ordered “physical” and “perceptual” space; it was an “[a]rchitectural zone where the spectator sat to watch the drama unfold, and a perceptual one that mediated the visual and acoustic relationship between the worlds of stage and audience” (Salter 2010, xxii).

Experimental use of technology was already present in both theatre and dance performances from the late nineteenth century (Dixon 2007, 4). American born and Parisian-based dance technologist Loie Fuller (1852—1928) experimented with electrical lights in her lavishly-costumed dance performances. She is reported to have used fifty electricians (one for each light) in a stage performance while touring the U.S in the early 1900s (Ullman West 1996, 1). Anna Kisselgoff claims “every mixed-media artist today owes a debt to [Fuller’s] pioneering use of electrical lighting and her synthesis of music, color, light and fabric” (Kisselgoff 1988, 1). Notwithstanding these earlier incarnations of mediatisation in performance, technology in theatre, dance and art exploded in these areas during the 1960s.

¹⁰ Auslander looks to digital forms of technology in later writings, in particular the ‘chatterbot’, a computer program that “mimics human response via words typed at a computer terminal” (Brown 2006, 3). Kevin Brown points out that Auslander continues his discussion of liveness in his 2002 article *Live from Cyberspace: or, I Was Sitting at My Computer this Guy Appeared and Thought I Was a Bot*. The ontological origin of the live performer is still denied but Auslander argues on temporal grounds that “a live performance is not live because the performer is alive; it is live because it takes place in real time” (Brown 2006, 4). Interestingly, time becomes an aspect to consider in his discussion, although still not from the perspective of audience receptivity. See also Auslander in Krasner & Saltz (2006, 87-104).

¹¹ In his book *Theatre, Performance and Technology*, Christopher Baugh looks at the development of scenography in the Twentieth Century and considers the complex uses of technology in the theatre. He draws out the “potent link between technology and spectacle, ownership and the rights of governing powers” (Baugh 2005, 1).

Founding member of Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T), Billy Kluver (1967), believed that “all the most important developments in the conjunction of technology with theatre, dance and performance” took place during the 1960s and 1970s (Kluver in Dixon 2007, 5).

Following on from his major research project The Digital Performance Archive (DPA) (1999 to 2001), Steve Dixon traces the history and development of computer technologies used creatively in art and performance in his compendium *Digital Performance: A History of New Media in Theater, Dance, Performance Art, and Installation* (2007).¹² Here he considers a diverse set of theoretical and historical approaches to understanding digital technology use, examining several performances, artists, engineers, and designers from Europe, Australia and the United States. Dixon broadly defines digital technology “to include all performance works where computer technologies play a key role rather than a subsidiary one in content, techniques, aesthetics, or delivery forms” (Dixon 2007, 3). Similarly, Susan Broadhurst, a leading practitioner and academic in digital practices within the field of creative arts, defines digital performances as those that “cross and blur the boundaries between dance, film, theatre, installation, sound, and biotechnology” (Broadhurst 2006, xv). Some of the more sophisticated and innovative technologies that interest Broadhurst include motion tracking, artificial intelligence, electronic sound technology for real-time interaction, and biotechnology. In her co-edited book *Performance and Technology: Practices of Virtual Embodiment and Interactivity* (2006), Broadhurst synthesises various authors’ and theorists’ writings and ideas on digital performance. The emotive, the intuitive, the ludic, and the sensate are foregrounded in studies of the corporeal in relation to digital media. What comes to the fore is the immediacy of the physical/virtual body within these digitised events.

Despite the fact that an array of analogue and digital technology systems have been present within live performance since the 1960s, Auslander has chosen television as the medium and the televisual as the context in which to ‘de-ontologise’ the relationship between live and mediatised forms. Since no ontological distinction can be made because they participate in the same “mediatic system” one immediately asks: what other media forms participate in this mediatic system? (Auslander 1999, 5). By expanding Auslander’s mediatic system to include media technologies interacting, rather than replacing live bodies in performance contexts, it may be possible to create a more apposite frame for answering

¹² The Digital Performance Archive was conducted in collaboration with Barry Smith between 1999 and 2001. See DPA website: <http://ntu.ac.uk/dpa/>.

Auslander's question (1999): "what is live performance and what can it mean to us now?" (1).¹³

Both Dixon and Broadhurst have made significant contributions to the theorisation of digital performance, which are not debilitated by the live, mediated debate. Consequently their research illumines experiences of the medium more expansively than those embroiled in valorising one form over the other. I will consider the more relevant aspects and examples of performance that Dixon, Broadhurst (and others) provide as a motivation towards my own examination of audience experience in digital performance. But first I will take a step back in history to consider the moment when 'mass media' as a cultural phenomenon was identified.

§1.1.2 UNDERSTANDING MASS MEDIA

As Auslander suggests, our cultural lives are dominated by the mass media, particularly those forms that show an immense capacity for reproducing. As a medium of communication, mass media "implies reciprocity, exchange and a minimal degree of interaction" on a large scale (Kroker 1997, 13). It is a medium exponentially growing in proportion to newer improved digital technologies in tandem with a technologically educated population of users. The whole field may be characterised by impermanence and disappearance, two related motifs reoccurring within a wider, trans-historical discussion of photography (Sontag 1979; Barthes 1981; Benjamin 1992), the televisual (Fry *et al.* 1993; Auslander 1997a, 1999); and newer digital forms of media (Broadhurst 2007; Dixon 2007; Salter 2010). In the so-called "Age of Information" (Lapham 1994, x), the themes of impermanence and disappearance rouse debate over the negative repercussions of mass media on human subjectivity and agency. Within the literature, the impact of technology (predicated as exploding, often with a consequent effect of imploding) on human life and ecological systems has affected a discourse of paranoia and anxiety in the social, cultural, political and ontological commentator.¹⁴ These debates centered on the relationship between humans and technology in design, production and communication constitute a vast and discordant domain, well beyond the scope of this thesis. However, where possible, I will

¹³ For the purposes of this thesis I take these media technologies to broadly include digital interactive systems with audio and visual outputs, non-interactive projections, and traditional stage lighting.

¹⁴ The idea of technology exploding in a quantitative sense is inverted by Marshall McLuhan in 1964, and later by Jean Baudrillard in 1983, into a movement described as a technological implosion.

highlight the dystopic position of particular thinkers as they relate to performance, art and technology.¹⁵

Performance and the visual arts are salient subject areas for interrogating and ontologically understanding the effects of technology on the human condition. Performance and art events function like tiny apertures, discontinuous and ahistorical, articulating the positive and negative effects of technological development and its impact on human subjectivity and agency. These events occur within what has been acknowledged as the mechanical and digital ages.¹⁶ These apertures, narrow and wide, provide key experiences for our analyses and interpretation resulting in existential, social, cultural and/or political discourses about the impact of mediatic forms. Conceptual motifs like impermanence and disappearance operate to draw out relevant perspectives in the various literature presented here, they point to other related motifs (like *presence* and *absence*), and provide the opportunity to assert an alternative approach to understanding the relationship between live and mediated forms.

Understanding Media: the context for understanding liveness?

In his introduction to Marshall McLuhan's infamous and novel excursion into the complex realm of mass media, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, Lewis Lapham points out that in 1964 McLuhan brought the terms 'mass media', 'global village' and the 'age of information' into our general vernacular almost overnight. Rather than the epistemological systems of a philosophical past, McLuhan's prophetic ideas emerged from a thick, elegant prose grounded in literary "idols of the age of print", including James Joyce, T. S. Eliot, and William Blake (Lapham 1994, xiii). Through gross pontification and exaggerated prediction, McLuhan evinced ideas that set the scene for the entire discipline of media and communication studies and laid the theoretical ground for understanding the debate between liveness and mediation in terms of a *medium*.

¹⁵ I take art to include all visual, sonic, installation, and conceptual forms.

¹⁶ Following Walter Benjamin, the mechanical age is identified in terms of materiality and mechanical reproduction. The first mechanical reproductions occurred with the Greeks and their "[t]wo procedures of technically reproducing works of art: founding and stamping. Bronzes, terra cottas, and coins were the only art works which they could produce in quantity. All others were unique and could not be mechanically reproduced" (Benjamin 1992, 212).

I will now delineate key aspects of McLuhan's theory in a manifesto-like style. I will then discuss these primary tenets in relation to the concept of *remediation* proposed by media and communication theorists Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin.

1. Simulation

Rapidly, we approach the final phase of the extensions of man – the technological simulation of consciousness (McLuhan 1994, 3).

For McLuhan, his book *Understanding Media*

[e]xplores the contours of our own extended beings in our technologies, seeking the principle of intelligibility in each of them (McLuhan 1994, 6).

2. The Medium is the Message

This is merely to say that the persona and social consequences of any medium—that is, of any extension of ourselves—result from the new scale that is introduced into our affairs by each extension of ourselves, or by any new technology (McLuhan 1994, 7).

3. The Content of a Medium is another Medium

The “message” of any medium or technology is the change of scale or pace or pattern that it introduces into human affairs (McLuhan 1994, 8).

McLuhan uses the electric light as an example to articulate this idea.

Whether the light is being used for brain surgery or night baseball is a matter of indifference. It could be argued that these activities are in some way the “content” of the electric light, since they could not exist without the electric light...The electric light escapes attention as a communication medium just because it has no “content”. And this makes it an invaluable instance of how people fail to study media at all. For it is not till the electric light is used to spell out some brand name that it is noticed as a medium. Then it is not the light but the “content” (or what is really another medium) that is noticed (McLuhan 1994, 8-9).

4. Technology as the Extension of Man

Against the claim by General David Sarnoff that “[t]he products of modern science are not in themselves good or bad; it is the way they are used that determines their value” (Sarnoff in McLuhan 1994, 11), McLuhan retorts:

[t]here is simply nothing in the Sarnoff statement that will bear scrutiny, for it ignores the nature of the medium, of any and all media, in the true Narcissus style of one hypnotized by the amputation and extension of his own being in a new technical form. It has never occurred to General Sarnoff that any technology could do anything but *add* itself onto what we already are (McLuhan 1994, 11).

Taking McLuhan’s four manifesto points on the nature of mass media as a frame, I reiterate Auslander’s question: in a culture dominated by mass media and television “what is live performance and what can it mean to us now?” (Auslander 1999, 1). McLuhan’s account of the genesis of mass media is understood through the technological media that affect human perception and action in the mechanical and electronic ages. In 1964, McLuhan was clearly pioneering an approach to the study of media. He claimed that the content of media, the cultural context of the medium, and the medium itself was the triadic schema for understanding the complexity of media in this epoch of information. McLuhan’s perspective offers a broad framework for understanding the complexities of media in terms of being a medium, and a concentration upon the reception of these media within the contexts where they operate. Central to his account are the psychological factors of media as extensions of the senses and perceptual structures of mankind. The experiences of those using and participating in technologies are significant factors in the overall understanding of any medium. McLuhan’s ideas are not systematically organized, and at times he borders on lunacy, but nonetheless, his attendance to the phenomena (the media in and by themselves) suggests experiential depth well beyond the parochial view of ontology as merely a “set of *a priori* assumptions” (Auslander 1999, 54).

Almost thirty years after the publication of McLuhan's now-infamous text, Bolter and Grusin published their work on the nature of digital media with the title *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (1999). Auslander appropriates Bolter and Grusin's central concept *remediation* in order to explain how early television modeled itself on live theatre for its properties of *immediacy* and *intimacy*. He appropriates this concept to show how live performance eventually reversed this remediation process to model itself on television once its economic and cultural position became jeopardised. In the following section, I will draw out additional inconsistencies with Auslander's position through a brief exposition of Bolter and Grusin's concept of remediation. This will be done firstly with respect to Auslander's treatment of live performance as a medium in the same mediatic system, and secondly by demonstrating the differences between Bolter and Grusin's understanding of immediacy in the context of remediation and Auslander's temporal extrapolation of the characteristic.

The Logic of Remediation

Bolter and Grusin's concept of remediation develops McLuhan's idea that the content of any medium is another medium. Firmly situated in the age of proliferating digital technologies, remediation is "a defining characteristic of the new digital media . . . it is the representation of one medium in another" (Bolter and Grusin 1999, 44-5); a medium "is that which appropriates the techniques, forms, and social significance of other media and attempts to rival or refashion them in the name of the real" (Bolter and Grusin 1999, 65). A medium remediates.

The real in this sense is the viewer's experience: an authentic, emotional response to all media (Bolter and Grusin 1999, 53). In Bolter and Grusin's account, a clear lineage in the remediation process of technological media can be made, starting with painting, then photography, closely followed by cinema, then television, toward the newer digital technologies like the World Wide Web. Remediation relies upon a double logic of *immediacy* and *hyperimmediacy*. Immediacy is the transparency of a medium. The design and intention of the medium's makers is to make the medium itself disappear.¹⁷ The artwork or thing

¹⁷ Bolter and Grusin's use of the term transparency, to make the medium disappear, is counter-intuitive to my understanding. To make something transparent would be to show how something works, to show its medium.

presented or represented gives the viewer, user, or visitor the sense that both the artwork and they are the only players present within that mediatic presentation (Bolter and Grusin 1999, 5-6). In new media, the term audience is often replaced by the terms user, visitor or viewer. Each of these terms denotes the kind of activity that the receiver of the artwork is undertaking. For example, a ‘user’ will generally be involved in some computer-based interaction like in Australian artists James Cunningham and Suzon Fuks’ on-line performance piece *Calling Home*. In a recent email I was directed as a user to:

[g]o to the Activelayers website <http://67.228.194.2/~activela/> for all the info about the project and instructions, and links to the stages. There are 4 stages which you can open from the ActiveLayers website into separate tabs or windows. They will all be active simultaneously 15 minutes before the performance, so just jump between the stages and interact with the 4 characters by typing through the chat on the right side of each stage. Don't forget to have your speakers or headphones on! (Igneous, personal communication, 31 March 2008)

The desire for an immediacy of the real started with the painted image around the time of the Renaissance. The spatial mathematics of *perspective* in painting was a combination of Leon Alberti’s linear perspective and René Descartes’ single vantage point perspective, and created “the illusion of three dimensional space within which things appeared to exist as our eyes in reality see them” (Bolter and Grusin 1999, 25). On this account, photography in the Nineteenth Century remediated painting in terms of its desire for perfect linear perspective: “a technique that effaced itself” (Bolter and Grusin 1999, 24). Transparency was achieved through a process of *automaticity* using the technology of a camera obscura: a single point of light reflecting an image. In all cases, the artist and process disappeared (Bolter and Grusin 1999, 24-25). Today, the more sophisticated digital attempts for transparency include virtual reality, where the goal is for the participant to have a completely unmediated visual experience (Bolter and Grusin 1999, 4).

Hyperimmediacy is immediacy’s “cultural counterbalance” (Bolter and Grusin 1999, 33) best described as “a visual style” privileging “fragmentation, indeterminacy, and heterogeneity”, and emphasising “process or performance, rather than the finished art object” (William J Mitchell 1994, in Bolter and Grusin 1999, 31). A hypermediatic combination takes as its raw elements, images, sound, text, animation and video, multiplying its mediation as it strives for immediacy. In the name of the *real*, hyperimmediacy “ultimately claims our

As a consequence, my later use of the term transparency in relation to technological media does not follow their meaning.

attention as pure experience without needing to refer to anything beyond itself”, whereas a medium that attempts to conceal its mediation points to worlds and spaces beyond itself (Bolter and Grusin 1999, 54). Examples of hypermediatisation include the multi-windowed user interfaces of World Wide Web pages, the personal PC desktop, multimedia CD-ROMs and video games (Bolter and Grusin 1999, 31); and had they been writing in the second decade of the 21st century, Bolter and Grusin would have no doubt included the smartphone and iPad. Hypermediated interfaces behave differently to those employing the principles of immediacy. They function to display multiple representations to the viewer/user and are accessible for interaction so that the user may select what they want to see or listen to. The processes are visible and usually the presence of the viewer/user is foregrounded.

Remediation unfolds as a double logic of immediacy and hyperimmediacy. According to Bolter and Grusin, most visual media in the digital age pertain to both, because they almost always refer to other media within the process of remediation (i.e. virtual reality is a medium of immediacy, but remediates television which has become hyperimmediate in its remediation of the World Wide Web) (Bolter and Grusin 1999, 185-194). The lineage of remediation includes newer media remediating older media and, as Auslander picks up, older media remediating newer forms. However, theatre and/or types of live performance as a clear-cut medium within this culture of ubiquitous media do not enter into Bolter and Grusin’s analysis at any point, particularly not in the sense of calling live performance a medium within the logic of remediation.¹⁸ Arguably this is the result of their concept being grounded in the technological determinism of McLuhan. Bolter and Grusin speak of media in terms of technologies within a visual culture and the process of remediation itself as a genealogical history of technological processes, from linear perspective in photography, camera lucida and subsequent techniques in photography to motion picture techniques, television broadcasting and beyond. Moreover, the theoretical perspective of Bolter and Grusin echoes Frederic Jameson’s understanding of postmodern culture. The mediatic system that these three theorists are concerned with when describing the process of remediation belongs to the tradition of fine arts. It is problematic to subsume live performance into the process of remediation as proposed by Bolter and Grusin because their (and Jameson’s)

¹⁸ Bolter and Grusin do discuss the remediation of the body in performance. They include examples of performative acts by Stelarc, Orlan, and Kate Bornstein who are all involved in cyborgian notions of extending or transfiguring the body and gender identity through technology (Bolter, Grusin 1999, 236-40). Live and/or performance art is mostly an ideological response to concepts and/or mediums of fine art, and so sits within this tradition. However, it is not apparent that the body presented in this way is what Auslander means by live performance engaged in a process of remediation with television.

mediatic system is more technologically determined and derives from the various media involved within the tradition of the fine arts or general visual culture. Live performance, as Auslander ostensibly hints at in the following quote, is always already a problematic form in a mediatised culture.

I intend to describe both live performances' cultural-economic competition with other forms and the position of live performance in a culture for which mediatisation is a vehicle for the general code *in a way that live performance is not (or is no longer)* (Auslander 1999, 5, *italics mine*).

For Auslander, we can only talk about live performance as mediatised or mediated because the case of live performance as an ontologically specific form does not exist: "*is not (or is no longer)*". If live performance "*is no longer*", does this entail it existed before? From this excerpt we find a striking ambivalence in Auslander's claim that liveness did not exist prior to mediatisation. Where accounts claim ubiquitous mediatisation, it is untenable to make liveness the subject of a story that presupposes its inexistence. By adopting the unchallenged concepts of remediation and mediatisation under these theoretical conditions, aspects of Auslander's project appear spurious, particularly given his misconstrual of the logic of remediation. Auslander appeals to this concept to bolster his claim for the inevitable playing out of the historical logic between the mediums of live performance and television but does not acknowledge the specific lineage of remediation outlined over the last few sections, which firmly places it in the tradition of the fine and contemporary arts (Auslander 1999, 7). Live performance, as understood by Auslander, is conveniently slipped into the process as a medium *remediated* by television.¹⁹

¹⁹ Bolter and Grusin declare outright that "[t]he prime target of television's remediation has been film". However, they do acknowledge—and interestingly through reference to Auslander's "forthcoming" text *Liveness* also published in the same year—that television drew on "vaudeville and the stage play" (Bolter and Grusin 1999, 185). Acknowledging this point does not prevent them from emphasising film as the main influence on television in the remediation process (Bolter and Grusin 1999, 185-194).

§1.1.4 RECEPTIVITY AND IMMEDIACY

So what of the ontological differences in discussions of television and film? Bolter and Grusin register these differences in terms of *receptivity*, while for Auslander the aspect of temporal *immediacy* (rather than the more complex form of transparent immediacy found in Bolter and Grusin) is foregrounded in the relationship between television and live theatre devoid of any interest in receptivity. Sandy Flitterman-Lewis suggests that the relationship between film and television is a difference with respect to receptivity.

Films are seen in large, silent, darkened theatres . . . there is an enforced and anonymous collectivity of the audience . . . all viewers are physically present at the same time in the relatively enclosed space of the theatre. In contrast to this cocoonlike, enveloping situation is the fragmentary, dispersed and varied nature of television reception (Flitterman-Lewis in Bolter and Grusin 1999, 186).

Even though television now pervades public spaces—especially in pubs and clubs televising sports and other programs—television is mostly viewed in the intimacy of the home. The significance of Flitterman-Lewis’ point is that she introduces the role of receptivity in her analyses of film and television, an important experiential aspect overlooked in Auslander’s study. At a film event, the co-gathering of audience members share in an at-the-same-time and same-place experience, predominately with strangers. A television event (watching the same channel) is experienced at-the-same-time (when not home recorded) between a distally dispersed audience, and within the intimate confines of the home, business, pub or club.²⁰ We can see that both film and television share an at-the-same-time with respect to temporal immediacy. Their differences relate to the spatial distances between the corporeal bodies engaged in the same experience, and the locations within which the viewing takes place. When the corporeal and proximal features of receptivity in the discussion on immediacy are taken into account, then we can argue that television does not remediate film on the basis of immediacy. Following this line of argumentation, what can be said about live performance and television? Live performance is (mostly) experienced at-the-same-time, immersively between strangers. The temporal reception experienced by audience members in a live performance is similar to film, and less like television. We can sit with friends/family, or

²⁰ A distal experience is one had remotely and at an unspecified distance from the source of an event. In digital technology terms, distal experiences contrast with simulacrum experiences that refer to technologies or systems that immerse the user or visitor. A simulacrum experience would be a virtual reality or interactive cinema event. Ken Goldberg includes television among other remote technologies which “provide knowledge at a distance”, like the telescope and telephone (Goldberg 2000, 3).

even know other people in the audience, but we are for the most part sharing in the event with strangers. Extending this reasoning to the live, mediatised event, it shares in the same spatial and temporal features of reception that theatre (live performance) and film do: experienced at-the-same-time immersively between strangers.

So what can we make of Auslander's claim that sees television remediate theatre in the first instance, and then theatre (live performance) remediate television on the basis of immediacy? Influenced largely here by Flitterman-Lewis, live performance is an immersive experience of the now-and-here, whilst television promotes a distal temporality of the now-and-there. In considering the spatio-temporal aspects of immediacy in relation to audience receptivity, the preliminary seeds are laid for a much deeper analysis of receptivity in terms of dimensionality, temporality, and spatiality in my phenomenology to come.

Stepping away from this concentrated critique of Auslander, the purpose of my next section is to engage with three different approaches that do not rely on the logic of remediation, and that suggest the relevance of receptive, embodied experience in the aesthetic examination of digital media practices involving a range of media.

§1.1.5 DIGITAL PERFORMANCE IN ITS OWN RIGHT

In *Mutant Media: Essays on Cinema, Video Art and New Media* (2007), critic and cinephile John Conomos investigates the convergence between new media and traditional cinema in artistic practice and academic analyses. He is particularly interested in the presence of film as installation in the museum/gallery world and its relationship to cinema. He asks: “[h]ow do we critique and relate to these new hybrid dynamic artworks of analog and digital media? And where is cinema in this vertiginous cultural landscape?” (Conomos 2007, 15) From this concern he implores that:

[w]e need to remember that cinema, from its early funfair origins in the 19th Century till the 1960s, uses numerous concepts, effects and techniques that were first articulated in that art form and are not necessarily evident in the new media arts (Conomos 2007, 16).

On this point, Conomos declares that new media art requires its own ahistorical model for analysis and criticism. Before experimental film of the 1960s, cinema was an art form unto itself with a tradition and system of analyses inadequate for understanding video, film and interactive installations in their contemporary form. Conomos discusses a trend of new media artists who use old film in new contexts: an “intertextual alchemy that is occurring between old and new media on the same plane of multimedia creativity” (Conomos 2007, 16). He is critical of approaches that attempt to critique or understand new media within screen arts through older models of film criticism.

This is one of the most critical tasks facing anyone who is interested in the screen arts today. We need to become switchboard operators across culture, space and time, and between analog and digital media; and we need to always question our own cultural baggage . . . This means becoming ‘empirical’ and less theoretically certain of ourselves, letting go of our dogmatic certainties about the Cartesian method of philosophising and becoming more intuitive, self critical and non authoritarian (Conomos 2007, 17).

To “question our own cultural baggage” resonates with the phenomenological method of bracketing and/or suspending our predispositions and presuppositions.²¹ In the spirit of

²¹ I do not directly engage with Film Studies, or its vast tradition of thinkers and scholars with their diverse philosophical perspectives, in this study. However, it is worth noting that cinema has experienced the same complex relationships to new digital forms as live performance and, as this section highlights, there is an ongoing demand for approaching these hybrid forms with newly formed frameworks for critical analyses and interpretation.

McLuhan, Conomos is interested in embracing the medium in order to develop frameworks that involve a more “intuitive” recognition of experience.

Likewise, Susan Broadhurst calls for a “new aesthetics” in the academic study and understanding of new media practices in live performance, asking:

[a]s digital technologies are becoming increasingly prominent in art practices, does the resultant physical/virtual interface give rise to a new aesthetics? What are the theoretical and practical implications of this? (Broadhurst 2007, 1)

The “transference of linguistic interpretation to the non-linguistic” phenomena encountered in events involving bodies and performance technologies fails to explain the presence of bodies, whether as physical or virtual agents (Broadhurst 2007, 16). Broadhurst acknowledges that “[u]nless the immediacy of the body (both physical and virtual) is made the focus of interpretation, such performances as the digital cannot be fully appreciated” (Broadhurst 2007, 16). The immediacy of the corporeal or virtual body is privileged over any notion of the ephemeral or transient live body (as proponents of the live would insist), or the negation of a body made absent through mediatisation. Broadhurst provides formal suggestions for developing an all-encompassing account of the body in digital practices without recourse to a process of remediation that will not break with the past.

In following the processes of remediation, media theorist Steven Holtzman eloquently discusses the early development of new media as a “repurposing” or “refashioning” of older media.

In the end, no matter how interesting, enjoyable, comfortable, or well accepted they are, these approaches borrow from existing paradigms. They weren’t conceived with digital media, and as a result they don’t exploit the special qualities that are unique to digital worlds. Yet it’s those unique qualities that will ultimately define entirely new languages of expression. And it’s those languages that will tap the potential of digital media as new vehicles of expression. Repurposing is a transitional step that allows us to get a secure footing on unfamiliar terrain. But it isn’t where we’ll find the entirely new dimensions of digital worlds. We need to transcend the old to discover the completely new worlds of expression. Like a road sign, repurposing is a marker indicating that profound change is around the bend (Holtzman in Bolter and Grusin 1999, 49).

Even though Conomos and Broadhurst do not explicitly engage with the concept of remediation in understanding the rise of new media in their respective fields of cinema and

performance, they wish to forge (or see forged) new critical frameworks to navigate this “unfamiliar terrain” and account for these “new vehicles of expression”.

Caroline A. Jones in her book, *Sensorium: embodied experience, technology, and contemporary art*, remains aloof to the imposition of critical frameworks that attempt to capture the complexity and diversity of relations between artists, audiences and technologies in art practices. Nonetheless, Jones tables a taxonomically shaped schema, characterising these complex relationships (Jones 2006, 6):

Immersive	The ‘cave’ paradigm, the virtual helmet, the black-box video, the earphone set
Alienated	Taking technology and “making it strange”, exaggerating attributes to provoke shock, using technologies to switch senses or induce disorientation
Interrogative	Work that repurposes or remakes devices to enhance their insidious or wondrous properties; available data translated into sensible systems
Residual	Work that holds onto an earlier technology, repurposes or fetishises an abandoned one
Resistant	Work that refuses to use marketed technologies for their stated purpose; work that pushes viewers to reject technologies or subvert them
Adaptive	Work that takes up technologies and extends or applies them for creative purposes, producing new subjects for the technologies in question

These aspects, immersive, alienated, interrogative, residual, resistant and adaptive, describe something essential about what the work does, how it relates to former technologies (much like remediation), what it induces within the spectator, how it innovatively serves to create new purposes, and how it provides new experiences. Jones' list is skeletal, but she clearly triangulates the artist, work of art (media), and audience in this unique frame for understanding the uses of digital media.

Conomos, Broadhurst and Jones each desire a new critical framework or alternative aesthetic approach to understand the emergence of new media technologies within cinema, performance and the visual arts. I too desire an all-encompassing, dynamic approach to examine the relationship between bodies and technologies in complex interactions. Embracing their spirit, I proposed in my research to design and implement a methodology

that could describe, analyse, interpret and engage critically with digital performance practice. I see this as a potent and experientially rigorous alternative to methods that are non-responsive to the receptivity of the phenomena at hand and exemplified by Auslander's approach critically addressed throughout this chapter.

Despite my criticisms of Auslander, I acknowledge his claim as a fruitful point of departure for a rigorous experiential investigation of media and bodies. What I see to be Auslander's omissions in his study of liveness have irrefutably inspired my project and influenced its orientation; for this, I am indebted to him. I do not presuppose a distinction, sameness, a unity, or any leading relation, or association between live and mediated forms. Even though distinctions and points of sameness may be found amongst relations and associations in the resulting phenomenological analysis, they will never be assumed in any determinative way, nor evaluated in hierarchical terms. I avoid vacillating between sides in this indissoluble debate, fought out between proponents of the live and those of the mediated even while Auslander remains as a spectral background detractor in his program to de-ontologise. By not taking sides, I am able to invest in the experience of the relationship from a new perspective, focusing upon encounters that allow me to inquire in a deeper way the structure of a performance based *object-event*, and so constructively move away from taking, at face value, claims that support either side of the debate.

There are two explanations for the conjunctive term object-event; one is self-evident, and the other philosophically motivated. Taken *prima facie*, the relationship between bodies and performance technologies are sensible objects interacting to co-constitute together with audience an event. This is simple reasoning. The philosophically motivated explanations are rooted in the phenomenological sense of object. A phenomenal object (that which appears is given) does not entail a hard-nosed distinction between object and subject, such that subjects only act upon objects taken as distinct from themselves; or that an object is only subject to a subject—as in Aristotelian logic where the predicate of a subject is a mere attribute or property. Taken more radically, Jean-Luc Marion implores that a phenomenal object “shows itself”, and so has a *self* “such that it takes the initiative of its own manifestation” (Marion 2002, 30). Such a self-determined manifestation on the side of the object resists the need for any form of subject, self, or ‘transcendental I’ to affirm it.

The dyad form object-subject is engaged in what Husserl calls a constitutive duet, whereby the constituted (object) and constituting (subject) are in a co-relative dance of

affection and *attention*.²² In a phenomenology inspired by methods that deal exclusively with objects of perception (constitutional phenomenology), it is impossible for me to refrain from using the word object.²³ To mitigate, I hyphenate it with the word event, where event carries a less ontic character than object. My usage has the same sense as the Stoics who viewed events as “incorporeal”. Paradoxically, an event is not a being, but a non-being, and is the result of the “activities of bodies [objects]” (Bréhier in Romano 2009, 6).²⁴ Drawing on Claude Romano’s characterisation of event: the incorporeal “occurs, happens, or, more rigorously . . . “is encountered” (*huparchei*)” (Romano 2009, 7). As a concept, ‘event’ has a rich and complex history in Western philosophy, which I do not attend to here. My encounter of the ‘live, mediatised object-event’ is a confluence of non-being (incorporeality), beingness (corporeality), subjectivity and objectivity.

And so it is towards a transcendental phenomenology that I turn in order to seek the structural depth, intricate layers, and dynamic movements of experiencing phenomena within selected object-events. But first I must clarify the various uses of ontology, considering its purpose and limits in the study of bodies and technologies.

²² For the role of affection and attention in Husserl’s phenomenology, see Steinbock (2004, 21-43).

²³ I discuss elsewhere in this dissertation the phenomenon of performer taken as object.

²⁴ For more on the Stoics and Hellenistic Philosophy see Long & Sedley (1987).

SECTION TWO

REORIENTATION

**That which has been sought from old and now
and in the future and constantly,
and that on which inquiry founders over and over again,
is the problem What is being?**

Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Z, 1.1028b2 ff (M. Heidegger, Trans. 1982 (15))

In Chapter 1, I presented several arguments against Auslander's claim that there is no ontological distinction between live and mediatised forms, and attempted to destabilise his subsequent program and strategies for a de-ontology against the theoretical background of media and communication studies. I will now directly address the role of ontology in performance in terms of its potential and suitability for understanding the relationship between bodies and technologies experienced in an aesthetic context. While my initial quest was to consider an adequate ontology for performance using phenomenology, in writing this chapter the identification of such an approach became overshadowed by the dilemma of whether an ontology of performance is even possible. And if possible, to what extent could ontology illuminate the relationship between bodies and media in a live, mediatised performance event?

Following a brief explication of the tradition of ontology understood as a theory of Being in the Western Philosophical tradition from Aristotle through to Heidegger, I will discuss the problems of a philosophical ontology that formulates the question 'What is Being?' from the standpoint of classical logic.²⁵ This movement away from a purely Heideggerian ontology is a strategic move towards Hans Georg Gadamer's concept of *play* in order to reinstate the spectator in the aesthetic understanding of the *mode of being* of an artwork. Gadamer shows how an ontology of art and representation is possible in phenomenological, rather than metaphysical terms. In pursuing this methodological thinking, I am then able to consider the problems and limits of ontology more generally while examining the relationship between live and mediatised forms. Rather than carry the weight

²⁵ For consistency throughout the text, I will capitalise the word Being to distinguish this more easily from 'being'. It is almost impossible to avoid the repetitious use of Being and being in the exposition of Heidegger's existential work. To introduce 'ego', 'subject' or 'self' as substitutes is firstly erroneous in definition, and secondly would confuse my later use of these terms when introducing other phenomenological thinkers. I also note upfront that I will present a more contemporary, analytic view of ontology through the work of Dale Jacquette (pp. 50-1), where ontology is understood to be the study/analysis of the kinds of 'things' there are and the differences between them. Things may include beyond the concrete, relations, events and ideas. This is different to a philosophical ontology that posits a 'theory of being'.

of ontology in a project dealing with aesthetic representations, I release the live and mediated debate from only being understood in terms of pre-determined, presupposed *a priori* categories such as disappearance, reproduction, repetition and distribution. Only within the polemical spirit to ontologise or de-ontologise liveness and mediation are these aforementioned categories unreflectively thematised. Throughout this section, I move away from the question of whether an ontology is useful or not (in some ways joining Auslander in his program to de-ontologise the debate) and turn towards a phenomenological investigation of this aesthetic relation between bodies and technologies. My reorientation towards a phenomenological aesthetics is enabled by the reinstatement of the spectator, who is a crucial figure in the aesthetic constitution of the object-event. I end the chapter by introducing this ‘spectator-analyst’, and discuss the spatio-temporal modes of their embodied reception while participating in the phenomenological examination of the object-event.²⁶

²⁶ Despite the grammatical concern for using a plural pronoun (i.e. they, their) for singular nouns (i.e. ‘the dancer’, ‘the spectator-analyst’), I adopt the contemporary approach of using a non-specific/gender-neutral pronoun to avoid the awkward use of gendered pronouns (i.e. his/her, she/he).

§2.2.1 WHAT IS ONTOLOGY?

By not accepting any one version of ontology put forward by either side of the live and mediated debate, the question of what is an adequate ontology for performances involving the interaction of live bodies and technology becomes central to the task at hand. But before considering an alternative, it is necessary to explain what ontology is and how it relates to aesthetic problems. The narrative begins with Heidegger and his recovery of the traditional problem of ontology from Aristotle, and more precisely, with the existential question of the meaning of Being: what is Being?

Heidegger's Ontology

For Heidegger, Being is essentially different from beings. Even though Being *belongs* to beings, it is not a being itself. Even though working out, or dealing with the question of Being is not my central concern in this thesis, I will briefly consider this question over the next few sections. In providing an exposition it is necessary to distinguish between the two uses of Being and being as their distinction is maintained throughout the literature. A being is “something, a table, a chair, a tree, the sky, a body, some words, and action” (Heidegger 1962, 13). To relate these ideas back to my task, the beings are the bodies, projections, stage objects in relationship with each other during a performance. It is, however, important to note that when referring to the Heideggerian thesis of Being, this Being belongs to beings, even though “Being is not itself a being” (Heidegger 1962, 17). “Every being is *something*; it has its *what* and as such has a specific possible *mode of being*” (Heidegger 1962, 18).

In *Being and Time (Sein und Zeit)*, Heidegger undertakes an existential analytic of *Dasein*: the nominated special being who is able to ask the question of the meaning of Being (*Seinsfrage*) and undertake its own analysis. Exposition of *Dasein's* basic constitution (the ‘formal indicators’) is worked out early in Division I of *Being and Time*, where Heidegger attempts to “lay bare” the structures of existence, at first in part, but always with a view to understanding the “totality-of-the-structure-of-Being” in general (Heidegger 1982, 227). In his introduction to Division II, Heidegger posits that the primordial ontological basis for *Dasein's* existentiality is temporality.

Heidegger's distinction between Being and beings is his most significant maneuver to set up the *ontological difference*: the distinction between the ontic (beings) and the ontological (many modes of Being). This differentiation presupposes the problem of

ontology: where ‘Being as modalised’ becomes a theme for inquiry (Heidegger 1962, 17). For Heidegger, in taking Being over beings, we transcend or surmount beings in order to reach Being (Heidegger 1962, 17). Heidegger is careful to point out that ontology understood as a transcendental science does not move down the path of a Kantian supersensible metaphysics, such that we are dealing with some Being behind beings.²⁷ Rather, it is a phenomenological explication of Being in our everyday comportments towards beings and Being in the world. This questioning is possible only in our capacity as that special character *Dasein*. And because the most basic structure of *Dasein* is temporality it is “temporality [that] makes possible the distinguishability between Being and beings” (Heidegger 1962, 18).

Heidegger is also aware that “ontology cannot be established in a purely ontological manner. Its possibility is referred back to a being, that is, to something ontical [a what-ness]” (Heidegger 1982, 19). With being as ground, ontology will lay emphasis on the multiple ways Being is expressed.

Every being has a way-of-[B]eing. The question is whether this way-of-[B]eing has the same character in every being—as ancient ontology believed and subsequent periods have basically had to maintain even down to the present—or whether individual ways-of-[B]eing are mutually distinct. Which are the basic ways of [B]eing? Is there a multiplicity? How is the variety of ways-of-[B]eing possible and how is it all intelligible, given the meaning of [B]eing? How can we speak at all of a unitary concept of being despite the variety of ways of [B]eing? These questions can be consolidated into *the problem of the possible modifications of [B]eing and the unity of being’s variety* (Heidegger 1982, 18).

²⁷ Heidegger faces his own dilemma of concealment with *Dasein*, that special exemplary character that not only asks the question of the meaning of Being, but is the being for whom Being is an issue. The structure of *Dasein* in relation to its own being and *its average everydayness* is trapped in a circular condition, never in fact able to disclose the totality of this structure, and perpetually moving towards its own death. Heidegger’s promise for disclosing the structures of Being is undermined by minor formal hermeneutic realisations within his preliminary analysis of *Dasein*.

The analysis of Das-ein is not only incomplete but at first *preliminary*. It only brings out the [B]eing of this being without interpreting its meaning. Its aim is rather to expose the horizon for the most primordial interpretation of being. Once we have reached that horizon the preparatory analytic of Das-ein requires repetition on a higher, genuinely ontological basis (Heidegger 1996, 15) (Hyphenated version of Das-ein used in Staumbaugh’s translation).

A further analytic of *Dasein*’s structures is required, “this time as modes of temporality”. However, this analytic never takes place in Division III as promised in the introductory chapters to *Being and Time*. *Dasein* remains further away from Being than anticipated in the pre-ontological. Arguably Kant’s inability to access *noumenal* existence (the world in itself) from the phenomenal world of appearance is not so divorced from the hiddenness of Heidegger’s Being for *Dasein*.

The ontico-ontological priority of Das-ein is therefore the reason why the specific constitution of the [B]eing of Das-ein—understood in the sense of the “categorical” structure that belongs to it—remains hidden from it. Das-ein is ontically “nearest” to itself, ontologically farthest away; but pre-ontologically certainly not foreign to itself (Heidegger 1996, 14).

It appears that *Dasein* remains at a structural distance despite Heidegger’s analytic project for the worldly disclosure of Being.

Heidegger's questioning of the ways of Being is, however, formally a *fundamental* ontology, and so constitutes a more complex structural question of the meaning of Being, that I will not elaborate upon in this project. Despite Heidegger's later attempt to overcome metaphysics and ontology, I will focus on his earlier methodological insistence that phenomenology is the only proper way to do ontology.

Phenomenology is our way of access to what is to be the theme of ontology, and it is our way of giving it demonstrative precision. Only as phenomenology, is ontology possible (Heidegger 1962, 60).

In accepting this basic approach, the question of Being—the main question of ontology in this tradition—becomes less significant. However, it is important to distinguish my project from being a phenomenology in the service of ontology, than as a phenomenology that is concerned with aesthetic experiences. By and large, I share Auslander's desire to avoid ontology, but do so in a radically different way. Auslander at no point considers the tradition of philosophical ontology, and, most notably, the origins of ontology as first philosophy in the study of Being and/or substance. It is, I suggest, remarkably negligent to overlook the history of ontology in one's strategy to challenge claims of an ontological difference, especially if one's purpose (historically motivated or not) is to discount any meaningful role for ontology in understanding the relationship between live and mediated forms. In pursuing an adequate version of ontology grounded in the phenomenological tradition, I look to Dale Jacquette's analytic critique of Heidegger to provide a means for de-ontologising (to use Auslander's term) the debate between liveness and mediation in an historically cogent and philosophically specific manner.

Problems with Philosophical Ontology

Jacquette discusses two distinct approaches to ontology: the first philosophical, the second as applied science. Philosophical ontology is conceptually focused upon the problem of why there exists something rather than nothing, the meaning of the concept of Being, and the question of why there exists only one logically contingent actual world. Applied scientific ontology concerns itself with “explicating a system of categories of existent entities” (Jacquette 2002, 5). Unlike philosophical ontology, applied scientific ontology relies upon real existents in the world while still concerning itself with a theoretical component. Concepts applied to real existents in the world will endeavour to describe, categorise, or list. For Jacquette, this distinction between philosophical and an applied scientific approach to ontology is important for maintaining his movement towards a “combinatorial” approach to ontology, an approach that indicates a strong interdependence between substance and concept.

Jacquette’s criticisms of Heidegger’s philosophical ontology, and the more formal logical approach that does not concern itself with real existents, convincingly presents the problems that traditional ontology can bring to the methodological discussion about aesthetic phenomena. His combinatorial ontology grafts a “preferred existence domain onto a satisfactory analysis of the concept of being”, and unites the theoretical demands of science (the existent domain) with the questions of philosophy (what is meant by being) on the grounds of classical logic (Jacquette 2002, 273). Jacquette acknowledges Heidegger for correctly making the distinction between the *ontological* (what it means to be) and the *ontic* sciences that deal with existents rather than concepts, but criticises Heidegger’s privileging of the phenomenological approach to philosophical ontology. According to Heidegger, the ontic sciences, in and by themselves, narrowly establish the whatness of a thing, and must be preceded by a fundamental ontology to lay bare the *a priori* structures of Being. The combination of a pure philosophical approach with an applied scientific is the ontological difference (the distinction between ontological and ontic) that Heidegger makes in *Being and Time*. Jacquette views this as an acceptable approach to ontology, but then rejects phenomenology as the only methodological approach to an *a priori*-based philosophical ontology. His solution is to return to classical logic.

For Jacquette, the ultimate question for pure philosophical ontology is what is being? Or, what does it mean to *be*? (Jacquette 2002, 1). Assertions of existence and nonexistence cannot be made without inquiring into the meaning of existence in general. The question of

being “[e]nquires into the precise meaning of the words ‘being’, ‘to be’, ‘exist’, ‘existence’, to be ‘real’, ‘actual’, ‘present’, ‘manifest’, and like cognates” (Jacquette 2002, 2). As an analytic philosopher, Jacquette is critical of the circularity implicit in conceptual explanations of Being, which rely on the use of synonyms to describe existence—viewing predicative statements such as “to *be* is to be existent or to be present” as ineffective “metaphysical puzzles” (Jacquette 2002, 12). He argues that logic is the only theoretical approach capable of rebalancing the dizzying effects of such circular tautologies, rejecting Heidegger’s predicative approach to the meaning of Being.

Jacquette’s preferred method for philosophical ontology is pure logic. However, systematically on its own, logic is unable to answer the question of what is meant by being. Logic is problematic, insofar as it is a system of abstraction and so remains troubled by existence. The logical form “If P, then P” ($P \supset P$) of the statement “If camels, then camels” neither proves that there are camels, nor that there are not. The form adequately deals with the logical possibility of existence through validity, but does not prove the existence of something out there in the world. If P, then P is true, then nonexistence for any instance substituted as P for this logical statement in the form ‘if not P’, then ‘not P’ ($\sim P \supset \sim P$) is also true. However, the truth of the statement is only validated by virtue of the logical form and not on whether the thing could be represented by P or $\sim P$ in each case, or if it exists or does not exist in the world. Moreover, such positing of existence or nonexistence through logical formulation does not resolve the existence of the ‘who’ that is making the claim: that is, the subject/speaker behind the statement. As a formal relation, pure logic on its own is unable to deal adequately with the actual existence of human beings, “human psychology, sense experience, perception, introspection, emotional attitude, existential situatedness or other phenomenological categories”, and so presents no solution to the question of what is meant by Being (Jacquette 2002, 43).

I share Jacquette’s concern about the ability of Heidegger’s existential analytic to get at the Being behind being. I further worry about the question of the copula ‘is’ in logical statements about logical objects that correspond to actual objects, and the subjectivity of the person who is thinking/uttering the statement. In fact, Jacquette’s analysis problematises logical and philosophical approaches as adequate ontological methods for understanding aesthetic phenomena. Can a firm metaphysical claim behind accepting something rather than nothing (or having access to the meaning of being itself) adequately deal with aesthetic relations? Finding myself in this position I, like Auslander, am on the path to de-ontologising

the relationship between live and mediatised forms. However, unlike Auslander, I reinstate audience in order to understand the relationship of bodies and technologies in aesthetic experience.

Leaving Heidegger and his *Dasein* well alone in my study, I now turn to the work of Hans Georg Gadamer who provides a more apposite frame for thinking through ontology in the aesthetic domain by restoring *audience* to the question of the ontological status of an artwork. In the following sections, I trace Gadamer's concern with Western aesthetic theory from Plato and draw out his concept of *play* in aesthetic experience. As an ontological framework for understanding art, the influence of Gadamer on my project is less burdened by an address to a putative *truth* of art and aesthetic experience, but more aligned with the phenomenological reinstatement of the spectator in Gadamer's attempt to aesthetically understand an artwork. In my reading of Gadamer, phenomenology precedes ontology: essence comes before existence. I will now briefly outline some important points in the history of the ontology of art presented in Gadamer's 1960 text *Truth and Method*.

Gadamer on Play

According to Gadamer, the ontological status of an artwork and its hermeneutic significance is a study of the *mode of being of the artwork* itself: the self-presentation of an artwork in its representation. Where representation is intended, the true nature of a painting, dramatic play or dance is the presentation of its representation and not the thing it is representing.²⁸ To contemporise Gadamer’s idea (given that he wrote at a time when most performance forms were representational), the Being of the artwork is either self-presentation of the representation, or self-presentation of its non-representation. For Gadamer, “the being of the representation is more than the being of the thing represented” (Gadamer 2004, 114): the naturalistic sketch of a tree as the presentation of a representation, and not the tree out there in nature, is the mode of being of that artwork. The multi-directedness of a representation means that the artwork is representing *for someone* and cannot be understood as a case of simple mimesis, insofar as the artwork represents something, someone else, or itself, as is the case with some performance forms.²⁹ An engagement with the relationship between an object represented and that which represents it does not account for the ontological status of an artwork.

In keeping with Heidegger, Gadamer understands Being through the concept of *play*. In art, play is always representing for someone. All works of art contain in themselves “an essential relation to everyone for whom the representation exists”, but Gadamer warns that one must be careful to not locate play’s Being (the mode of the being of the artwork itself) in the player’s “consciousness or attitude”, as it is never simply a case of subjective reflection (Gadamer 2004, 114). The object of examination is the interactive phenomenon of play between players; play is maintained to be the mode of Being of the artwork in ontological investigations. Play *transforms into a structure*, and thus possesses its own essential structures. This transformation causes the identity of the players to no longer exist outside of play itself. Transformation here functions in terms of *recognition* in the Platonic sense.

²⁸ Representation is a topic of endless debate in a number of different disciplines. In performance studies, representation questions and problematises underlying theories of the self. Postmodern forms of dance challenge balletic representations and modernist principles of mimesis and abstracted shape. This is seen through physical methodologies grounded in presenting the process of a task-based exercise and the natural effort involved in moving the body as a consequence. For more on dance as non-representational see Claid (2006).

²⁹ Performance improvisation and some postmodern or postdramatic forms of theatre are artforms where the presentation of the performer self is preferred over representations of character. For more on this see Morrish (1995) & Lehmann (2006).

The 'known' enters into its true being and manifests itself as what it is only when it is recognised. As recognised it is grasped in its essence, detached from its accidental aspects. This is wholly true of the kind of recognition that takes place in relation to what is represented in a play. This kind of representation leaves behind it everything that is accidental and unessential, e.g. the private particular being of the actor . . . But even that which is represented, a well-known event of mythological tradition, is raised by its representation, as it were to its own validity and truth (Gadamer 1975, 103).

The truth of the representation (or whether it discloses reality) is not a central concern for my study. Rather, my focus is upon the role of the spectator in the experience of an artwork that is aesthetically thematised. Aesthetic understanding is only possible through the *play* of a presentation between various players: artist (production), work of art (the work) and the spectator (reception). These three players form an intersecting tripartite structure as a model for understanding aesthetic experience. A useful diagram identifying these three delimited regions is sketched below (Figure 1). Traditionally this relationship has been emphasised differently within aesthetic theory.

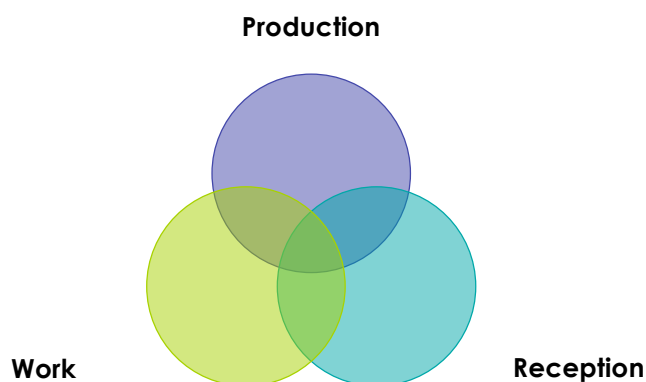


Figure 1: Model representing Gadamer's tripartite structure of aesthetic understanding

Gadamer arrives at his concept of play in response to the dominant aesthetic systems within the Western tradition for understanding beauty, taste, nature and art. The overlapping central union of all three spheres on the diagram (the darker shade of green) visually represents Gadamer's position. In the following section I will present a brief synopsis of aesthetic theory as it relates to this model. In order to provide a backdrop to Gadamer's ontology, I consider two historical conceptions of aesthetics within the Western philosophical tradition of art—

those of Plato and Kant—before developing a more holistic aesthetic system that reinstates the spectator.

The Western Philosophical Tradition of Aesthetics

In order to draw out the significance of Gadamer's concept *play* and develop the role of audience in my undertaking of a phenomenological aesthetics, it is worth bearing in mind the history of aesthetic theory from Plato's dialogue the *Philebus*, skipping a number of centuries to then focus on Immanuel Kant. This will permit me to consider the concepts of beauty, nature, pleasure, taste, the sensuous and intelligible, aesthetic judgement, disinterest and role of the artist genius.

Plato's concept of beauty, or the beautiful, is best explained in his *Philebus* from the third group of dialogues written between 380 and 370 BCE, a dialogue in which he attempts to explain the 'good life' (Waterfield 1996, vii). Plato explains that beauty is caught up with a sensory type of pleasure not necessarily associated with art. For Plato, aspects of nature are beautiful. This sensory type of pleasure is associated with the appreciation of sensuous qualities, but is essentially different to the pleasures experienced in the gratification of a bodily desire. This distinction between sensory pleasure and pleasures derived from the body (often explicated as purposeful and dependent, e.g. the itching of a scratch) qualifies another distinction between 'intelligible' and 'sensuous' knowledge, and is a very important epistemological distinction in the Western tradition of aesthetic thinking from Plato through to postmodernity.

In the *Philebus*, 'sensuous quality' is best described in the following excerpt through the voice of Socrates in dialogue with Protarchus:

By the beauty of shape. . . I mean. . . something straight or round and what is constructed out of these with a compass, rule, and square, such as plane figures and solids. Those things I take it are not beautiful in a relative sense, as others are, but by their very nature forever beautiful by themselves (Plato 1993, 60).

The Platonic account of beauty is non-relational. Colours and sounds are not beautiful in relation to anything else, but are beautiful in and by themselves. True pleasures derived from qualities are non-dependant. Ideas of dependent and non-dependent beauty, relational and non-relational beauty are mapped accordingly and respectively upon the dichotomy sharply drawn between the sensuous and intelligible. Over the course of several centuries, these two

modes of pleasure with respect to the beautiful have been variously retained as distinctions, mediated by some third or fourth aspect, or conjoined. The latter is evident in the application of Kant's *synthetic a priori* to aesthetic experience and his theory of taste.³⁰ Confined to conceptually manipulating the relationship between the sensuous and intelligible leads to a simplified view of traditional and modern systems of aesthetics.

Seventeenth-century rationalist Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz argued that our sensory ideas (say the idea of redness in our perception of blood as red) are just confused versions of the kinds of ideas we have when we understand what is being perceived in abstract mathematical terms. For example, our sensuous apprehension of music is just confused knowledge of mathematical relations, and our apprehension of dance is *nothing but a confused walk*. In the latter part of the eighteenth century, Immanuel Kant reframed this relationship between 'sense knowledge' (the sensuous) as empirical, and 'rationalist knowledge' (the intelligible), moving towards an understanding of an innate quality of mind. Kant saw knowledge as relying on both the mind's active contribution and the constraints of a world we can never know, passively received through our sensuous faculties. In coming to know the world, we rely on the free or spontaneous activity of the mind in its application of certain innate conceptual frames to experience. Bertrand Russell provides an excellent metaphor for understanding Kant's relationship between the free play of imaginative faculties and the pre-given world of appearance: the world existing out there causes us to receive it both passively and sensuously through perception. The mind, likened to a pair of spectacles, supplies concepts (categories) not unlike differently-coloured and shaped lenses through which to see the world. The mind's innate concepts (provided to us at birth) generate either different judgements and allow us to organise phenomena in our understanding of such things as time and space, logical truths, morality, God, and aesthetics (Russell 1961, 680).

Kant turns to the question of aesthetic judgement in *The Critique of Judgement (Kritik der Urteilskraft 1790)*, and outlines what has become a foundational moment in the

³⁰ In the history of philosophy, or epistemology to be more precise, propositions, statements or concepts about the world if derived from reason were *analytic*. Analytic propositions are born from first principles without any need for experience; they are necessary and knowable *a priori*. Following empiricist David Hume, Kant became critical of rationalistic dogma and the tradition that expelled experience in the forming of metaphysical knowledge of the world. Hume was more skeptical in his complete rejection of the idea that rationalists touting necessity with their analytic truths could tell us anything about the world or provide knowledge (for Hume we should not even trust the laws of causality). As a natural scientist, Kant was more sympathetic to the physical laws of science, like those discovered by Newton. They are necessary laws discovered through experience, a case of *a posteriori* knowledge. Since these laws are not derived from reason alone but still necessary, they are not sufficiently analytic propositions. Kant characterised these propositions as *synthetic a priori*. The dynamic of Kant's formulation was the basis for his system of categories that constitutes the phenomenal world, the accessible world of appearance, and estranges us from the noumenal world, the world in itself (Kant 1987).

development of Western modern aesthetics: an analysis of the judgement of taste. The critique begins with Kant asking: how do we decide whether something is beautiful or not?

If we wish to decide whether something is beautiful or not, we do not use understanding to refer the presentation to the object so as to give rise to cognition; rather, we use imagination (perhaps in connection with understanding) to refer the presentation to the subject and his feeling of pleasure or displeasure. Hence a judgement of taste is not a cognitive judgement and so is not a logical judgement but an aesthetic one, by which we mean a judgement whose determining basis *cannot be other than subjective* (Kant 1987, 44).

Taste is the ability to judge an object by means of a liking or disliking. The object of such a liking is called *beautiful*. A judgement of taste is *devoid of all interest* and derives from the subjective meaning that we give a representation (Kant 1987, 53), and is unlike Gadamer's concept of play, which operates beyond subjective reflection. For Kant, matters of taste are not dependent on the existence of objects (Kant 1987, 51). Such a position echoes Plato on the non-relational, non-dependent characteristics of beauty in respect to aesthetic judgement.

From Kant's critique I take two propositions:

- 1) The perceptual presentation of an object to the mind has both sensory content contributed by the object, and form contributed by the mind (the Russell metaphor of spectacles).
- 2) Aesthetic beauty is 'disinterested', meaning that the existence and practical interest of the object is of no consequence to aesthetic understanding. During aesthetic experience, the Kantian sense of mind is not constrained by those types of concepts occurring in theoretical judgements. Thus, the mind is free to traverse its imaginings in the free play of all its cognitive powers.

However, Kant's "grounding of aesthetics on the judgement of taste", when taste itself supplies no knowledge like other judgements, does not offer a theory of art, but a critique (an account) of aesthetic judgement (Gadamer 1975, 38-9). Noël Carroll succinctly captures Kant's position on aesthetic judgements:

The free and harmonious play of cognition and imagination, independent of the claims of purpose, practicality and knowledge [a non-dependency], give rise to a special form of pleasure, aesthetic pleasure (Carroll 2001, 31).

Two important criticisms of the influential Kantian system yield criteria for reflecting upon the aesthetic experience of mediatised dance. The first relates to Kant's aesthetic disinterest, where a practical interest in the object (its context, ideas, and association with life) is excluded from the harmonious free play of the mind in aesthetic exaltation.³¹ Such experiences disavow artworks that are conceptual, and so targets the entire history of modern art since Duchamp's 'readymades'.³² These works cannot be accounted for by a theory of beauty, and so fall outside aesthetic determination when viewed through Kantian spectacles.

Let us take the case of a dance performance using a motion tracking system. A decision must be made regarding whether the technology that produces certain visual and audio outputs will be transparent or hidden to the audience. Where non-transparent, the illusion of the world created by these outputs in relation to moving bodies is maintained by an attempt to mask the material and technical structures that permit the complex relationships between live and mediatised forms. In such cases where the intention is to hide the technology, I raise the problem of Kantian disinterest. First, we could ask: is having a 'practical interest' in the object co-foregrounded with the free play of the lower faculties of the mind in its imaginings—as Kant would only have it? Or second, do we lose access to 'practical interest' if the processes are tucked away from our visual perception? And if so, what are we left with: aesthetic experiences that are non-dependent on technical processes, and only beautiful for beauty's sake? Or more radically, if not beautiful, then, no aesthetic experience at all?

Drawing upon my experiences of media art and digital performance, the first question appears to hold true across the various encounters where the relationship between body and technology is made explicit, and I have been a spectator. I usually want to know where the cameras are positioned, or body sensors located; where the projector is, what software they might be using; what is a live feed image, modified image done in real-time (VJ-ing), or a post-produced image pre-recorded and played back; and finally, how integrated are the screen image or graphic (depending on the kind of system) with the moving live figure(s). For me,

³¹ Kant's interest is in the *pure* judgement of aesthetics as an analytic of transcendence, not a general theory of art (Gadamer 2004, 39).

³² Marcel Duchamp's infamous work *The Fountain* of 1917 is the most theorised of his conceptual pieces. See http://arthistorian.files.wordpress.com/2007/08/duchamp_fountain.jpg.

these are all aspects that contribute to the fullness of my aesthetic experience, regardless of whether I am sensorially struck by the technological relationship, or can think and/or declare the performance beautiful. To announce a performance just beautiful is a rarity in my experience. I am more satisfied by digital performance when I can ask questions about the set-up and processes, whether they are transparent or not. If these processes are hidden, then I would still answer ‘no’ to my second question; we do not lose access to practical interest.

Over time my practical interest has become more pronounced as my knowledge of digital technology in performance has deepened—like understanding the processual relationship between an infrared camera picking up a live image and then feeding it into a computer that processes the algorithmic data for visual or audio outputs via projection and sound amplification. Non-transparent technological processes provide no leading clue to accepting Kantian disinterest in the practical, nor any clue to meaningful judgements of beauty in aesthetic experience—if the performance is indeed determined to be aesthetic. Practical disinterest in the processes that make performance is a problematic position, and arguably more so in technological performance events where the play of technology is a foregrounded aspect of the artwork. Kantian practical disinterest has not stood the test of time, with visual art practices evolving beyond the two-dimensional painting.

The second well-noted criticism of Kant is that his theory of taste and beauty perpetuates the veneration of the artist genius, and therefore, the substitution of taste—the original dominating category in experiences of art—by that of the genius. The consequences of shifting emphasis from taste to genius were significant in the development of many theories of art. With taste receding in importance, an artwork was highlighted in terms of the artist possessing the spirit of genius. According to Gadamer, the notion of the artist genius was transformed by a misreading of Kant’s “Third Critique” by members of the *Sturm und Drang*.³³ With the rise of the genius, the ontological status of the artwork is reduced to *production* alone (see blue circle on Figure 1, p 54).

³³ Key figures of the *Sturm und Drang*, Hamman, Herder and Goethe, found “a point of contact for their self-understanding only in the concept of genius validated by Kant’s aesthetics” (Gadamer 2004, 47-8). Gadamer, however, is adamant that Kant did not mean for the notion of genius to overtake taste, arguing “that for Kant the concept of genius was really only a complement to what was of interest to him ‘for transcendental reasons’ in aesthetic judgement” (Gadamer 2004, 47-8). For a comprehensive overview on the meaning and history of the artist genius in relation to the Western philosophical and classical music tradition including Kant’s aesthetics see Eisen & Keefe (2006, 190-195) & Murray (1991).

Kant says of artistic beauty that “in judging such an object one must consider the possibility of spirit – and hence of genius – in it” and in another place he makes the obvious point that without genius not only art but also a correct, independent taste in judging it is not possible. Therefore the standpoint of taste, insofar as it is practised on its most important object, art, passes inevitably into the standpoint of genius. Genius in understanding corresponds to genius in creation (Gadamer 2004, 49).

What is problematic about the subjectivisation of art through the concept of the artist genius? Besides ignoring the existence of the art object itself (where aesthetics as a system of taste is also responsible), the role of the receiver (spectator) is further diminished. On Gadamer’s account, through particular figures emerging from the *Sturm und Drang* movement, an emphasis on the artist genius and prominence of the subjective as *a priori* to aesthetic judgement eventually led to the twentieth-century death of the subject in European Western thinking: arguably this misappropriation precipitated early poststructural and postmodern notions of the subject and a multitude of programs for desubjectivication and fragmentation. More radically dire consequences were felt with respect to ‘freedom’, ‘will’, ‘self determination’ and presuppositions of difference (or *differance*) in the subject following the end of the Enlightenment.

With the emphasis on production over the work and its reception, the artist became the basis for judgements of aesthetic value. It is against this understanding that we must read Gadamer’s model. Restating the three regions involved in Gadmer’s conception of aesthetic play, we can isolate *production*: associated with the making of the work by the artist, the artwork contains the spirit of the ‘artist genius’; *work*: the artwork in and by itself as ‘object’ or *object event*, including performers; and *reception*: the reception by a spectator or audience, ‘audience experience’.

Gadamer declares that in order to gain an adequate understanding of an artwork, the *play* between production, work and reception must be taken into account. The resulting play is demonstrated by the intersection of these three aspects as a unity visualised in Figure 1 on page 53. My investigation of the relationship between specific aesthetic phenomena using phenomenology follows on from Gadamer’s holistic thinking about the role of artist, the work and spectator in aesthetic understanding. The reinstatement of spectator against a background of subjectivist theories of art is highlighted in my dissection of the following passage from Gadamer:

Once the aporias of this subjective turn in aesthetics have become evident to us,

That is, the ongoing problems associated with Kant's theory of taste and emergence of the artist as genius.

[W]e are forced to return to the older tradition.

The Platonic understanding of art and nature

If art is not the variety of changing experiences whose object is filled subjectively with meaning like an empty mold we must recognise that 'presentation' is the mode of being of the artwork.

The true nature of the painting, dramatic play (or more relevantly, the dance) is the presentation of its representation and not the thing that it is representing. For example, as suggested earlier, the true being of the charcoal etching of a tree is not the tree it represents, but rather the mode of presentation.

In being *played* the play speaks to the spectator through its presentation and it does so in such a way that, despite the distance between it and himself, the spectator still belongs to play (Gadamer 2004, 115).

The being of the artwork (the dramatic play, painting, symphony or dance) in aesthetic understanding involves the participation of the spectator in their belongingness to play; with this, Gadamer reinstates reception.

In fact, the relationship between players involved in live, mediatised events is more complex than the theatrical and musical performances Gadamer speaks of in *Truth and Method*.³⁴ In his examples, the structural relations and representations between performers and audience are more defined. Technology as a player in *play* adds complexity to the relations between performer, audience and the representational, and so requires an expanded framework for dealing directly with these diverse aesthetic forms in unique systems of interaction.

Situated at the forefront of contemporary philosophical aesthetics, Dominic Lopes understands the need to account for the growing frontier of digital practices in the visual arts. With the ongoing emergence of new technologies, art experiences are becoming more

³⁴ Even though *Truth and Method* was published in 1960, and Gadamer did not pass away until 2002, his performance examples are traditional, pre-modernist and devoid of digital technology as a player or artwork. This is despite the digital amplification of voice and music and other technologies in the theatre.

complex and so require a different kind of analytical attention to previous models of art theory. As Lopes states: “[n]o account of evaluating a picture as a picture will be complete if it ignores the part played by experiences of the picture and the scene it depicts” (Lopes 2005, 4).

In the field of interactive art, aesthetic experiences are structured differently to those produced through viewing art on walls or proscenium style performances. The spectator can no longer be held “synonymous with empty gaping” (Lopes 2005, 4). Rather, the spectator is (for the most part) responsible for the realisation of the artwork; and more prevalent in these experiences are their embodied interactions.³⁵ With this expanded attention toward embodied experience within the context of interactive art, Lopes’ call for ontology becomes interesting.

While interactive art raises many interesting questions that a full account of it must address, a good start can be made by examining its ontology. Indeed, most questions about interactive art cannot be properly addressed absent a rough outline of its ontology (Lopes 2001, 65).

Lopes attends to the ontology of art by analysing concepts. However, at no point in his article “The Ontology of Interactive Art” (2001) does he attend to the phenomenological datum of specific art experiences. Since it is the purpose of this dissertation to undertake an adequate study of phenomena that discloses their essential structure from various experiences communicated through language, an inadequate beginning would be to focus upon a fixed framework of concepts as a leading clue for disclosure. Surprisingly, analytic philosopher of art Noël Carroll resists a framework of analysable concepts in his comments about our interaction with art.³⁶ He notes that artworks “[a]re most essentially ‘experiential’ or ‘perceptual’ where those terms are generally understood by contrast to responses mediated by the application of concepts or reasoning” (Carroll 2001, 5).

My study foregrounds audience and is a movement towards balancing the relationship between artist, artwork and reception. Thus, by giving an account of ontology—or any meaningful explanation of existence: ‘what is it to be’ or, ‘what is the being of these forms’—becomes a byproduct, rather than a leading clue in the understanding of these types of performances. As stated earlier: phenomenology precedes ontology. I will now discuss the

³⁵ For more on interdisciplinary art practices and academic research within the growing field of interactive art, within an Australian context, see Cleland (2008, 4-7) & Edmonds & Muller (2009, 141-151).

³⁶ In an earlier text *Philosophy of Art: a contemporary introduction* (1999), Carroll historicises the philosophy of art through concepts such as mimesis, representation, expression, aesthetic form and aesthetics. He conducts an analytic investigation of concepts that are fundamental to art practices (Carroll 1999).

role of audience in aesthetic play within the confines of a phenomenological study, and delineate the spatio-temporal modes of embodied reception.

§2.2.3 AUDIENCE: SPECTATOR-ANALYST

Receptivity can be understood phenomenologically as the spectator's embodied experience.³⁷ The spectator for the purposes of my study is of a special kind, trained in the techniques of practical phenomenology.³⁸ As a consequence, their experience is essentially modified from 'normal spectatorial' experiences. Performance studies semiotician Gay McAuley recognises that performance analysis "is not simply an extension of normal 'spectatorly' practice" (McAuley 1998, 8). In semiotic approaches to performance analysis, the spectator is crucial for interpreting the semiosis (meaning) of the performance in terms of its material production and narrative content. Extending McAuley's spectatorly practice, I take this to mean a spectator informed by any method that is underwritten by a philosophical perspective. Thus for my purposes, the preferred approach is phenomenological.³⁹ However, the task for the spectator-analyst is not so straightforward: they are expected to adhere to a suggested framework for experiencing selected phenomena whilst attending to the performance in a genuinely immersed way. This raises the problem of what it means to be genuinely immersed. Gadamer, with Heideggerian diligence, describes the participation of a spectator attending a theatrical play or musical concert.

The being of the spectator is determined by his "being there present" (*Dabeisein*). Being present does not simply mean being there along with something else that is there at the same time. To be present means to participate. If someone was present at something, he knows all about how it really was. It is only in a derived sense that presence at something means also a kind of subjective act, that of paying attention to something (*Bei-der-Sachesein*). Thus watching something is a genuine mode of participating (Gadamer 2004, 121-2).

³⁷ I will now use the term spectator rather than audience to describe this special kind of audience member who has the dual occupation of being in audience as a spectator and analyst.

³⁸ I dedicate an entire chapter on the background and continuing tradition of practical phenomenology in my upcoming section on methodology. See Chapter 5.

³⁹ For a discussion regarding the differences in critical approaches to the "moment-by-moment-existence" of performance art and theatre's mimetic, discursive and narrative based tradition see Carlson (1996, 123-144). Phenomenology is more adequate than structural semiotic approaches to questions regarding the immediacy and being-there of the performer and audience alike. For more on the different critical approaches in Performance Studies see Reinelt & Roach (1992), Fortier (1997) and McAuley (2001, 5-19).

A spectator is an immersed player in *play*, and not a non-participating bystander to a performance event. The crucial role of the spectator in a participatory being-present arguably centres them as an essential factor for making analysis. Consequently there are problems with their full immersion in play if the spectator takes on the dual occupations of spectator and performance analyst. The selected method of analysis must address this problem.

The trained phenomenologist, undertaking particular practical techniques while in the act of being a spectator, will experience the tension between these two types of receptive participation: audience member and analyst. Appropriating Husserl's structure of perceptual synthesis, I identify these two types as modes of passive and active perception. However, in order to avoid the dangers of identifying spectatorial participants as 'passive' agents within audience, I mitigate the term with a modal spectrum of receptivity that stretches with fine-grained distinction between the two poles of passive and active perception:

Passive - - - - Passive-Active - - - - Active-Passive - - - - Active

The spectator trained in performance analysis is located more decidedly at the active end of the spectrum. Husserl's genealogy of logic, however, reveals a structural process that starts in 'pre-predicative experience', the lowest level of activity for the *ego*, and moves toward the structure of predicative thought where higher order judgements form our conceptual systems.⁴⁰ In Husserl, the origin of conceptual thought is a movement from experience to judgement; it is a process of *becoming*, moving away and upwards from the most passive activity in perception, receptivity.⁴¹ But here I turn Husserl's (vertical, arboreal) structure of passive and active synthesis on its side to avoid engaging a hierarchical schema. A sideways or traversing movement in the processes of coming to a judgement assists in avoiding any evaluations that prioritise more active cognitive states of thinking over pre-predicative experiences in the *ego*.

My spectrum of receptivity allows for possible movement by the spectator in their modes of receptivity during performance as both audience member and analyst. The idea of

⁴⁰ As was noted earlier with my use of the terms *Being* and *being* in relation to Heidegger's philosophy, I will now use the term *ego* in my discussion of Husserl's work. It is important to remain consistent with the author's terminology during my exposition of their work, as each author means these terms in a very specific ontological and existential sense.

⁴¹ For an excellent overview to Husserl's systematic account of the relationship between the base layers of experience working towards higher-order judgement in general perception, see Spencer Churchill's Translator's Introduction (1972) in (Husserl 1973, xxi-xxx).

passivity in spectating is anathema to current perspectives in studies of the spectator, which is why this spectrum, outlined above, indicates the genetic and synthetic processes of a highly dynamic passive and active relation within receptive states. Even for Husserl, at the lowest levels of reception, the ego is active in its relation to objects in the world, which is: a pre-given field of prominences affecting a seductive allure on the ego. The ego is “struck”, it “yields” and actively “turns towards” these prominences antecedent to any cogitation. This active turn of regard is “the being-awake of the ego” (Husserl 1973, 71-9). Placed vertically or horizontally, the passive--active spectrum is a useful representational tool for understanding Husserl’s thinking on perception, experience and horizontal consciousness as it relates to world and other subjects.

Gadamer suggests that for the spectator sitting in a proscenium-style theatre, their ‘being present’ is a passive act of attention: a genuine and normal mode of spectatorship (Gadamer 2004). By being attentive to something, the spectator is able to forget their purpose; they are ultimately carried away by what they see. This understanding promotes a Gestaltian shape in perception, foregrounding that which we pay attention to and withdrawing our thoughts or purposes into the background. Gadamer’s thought is distinctly Heideggerian. Heidegger’s ‘ready-to-hand’ concept explicates Gadamer’s point and gives the Gestaltian movement a lived-world flavour.⁴² To emphasise the Gestaltian structure of foreground/background relations, Merleau-Ponty (interestingly) uses the theatre as a metaphor to explicate the spatiality of one’s body in relation to external space.

Bodily space can be distinguished from external space and envelop its parts instead of spreading them out, because it is the darkness needed in the theatre to show up the performance, the background of somnolence or reserve of vague power against which the gesture and its aim stand out, the zone of not being *in front of which* precise beings, figures and points can come to light. (Merleau-Ponty 1962, 115)

The issue of Gadamer’s privileging of sight in his explanation of spectators ‘being present’ at a theatrical play needs to be reconsidered. Many analytical approaches of the twentieth century in theatre and dance studies have placed an emphasis on ‘seeing’ or ‘sight’, and this is an ongoing theme in respective methodological debates.⁴³ In reception, a spectator of

⁴² See (Heidegger 1962, §16, 102-7)

⁴³ Gay McAuley identifies an inadequacy in theatre studies for its ongoing emphasis on the ‘visual’ and/or ‘sight’ in spectatorial practice, entailing that we ignore the body’s entire *sensorium* in what is an essentially embodied experience. Unlike theatre studies or traditional cinema studies, performance studies is equipped to address this visual preponderance with its variegated critical practices formed from inter-disciplinary interests (McAuley 200, 10).

performance is carried away by what they think, hear, feel, smell, emote and imagine. Their experience is not limited to what they can see, nor are they entirely motionless. These aspects of reception are inextricable from visual reception, but can be isolated through attentional practices for the purposes of analysis. For example, if I wish to only understand what I am hearing, I can focus all my attention on the words of the performance, the vocal quality of the performer, the sound of objects and noises of the auditorium, the music and/or sound score. In extending Gadamer's spirit of spectatorial play, we discern that our entire embodied consciousness is involved in reception. The structure of embodied consciousness as a spatial and temporal concern in spectatorial participation will be considered over the next two sections.

The Spatiality of Audience

Following Alan Read, Gay McAuley emphasises the spatial dimension of the spectator in the following passage.

Seeing, watching and looking at theatre do not begin to explain what happens between an audience and a performer, and I have argued that the spectators' experience in the theatre is spatial rather than visual, that they experience the performance with all their senses, and they are there *in* the space, not looking *at* it (McAuley 2001, 16).

In contrast to McAuley's placement of a spectator 'in' the space (but nonetheless deepening the idea that in fact a spectator's experience is spatial) I turn to Merleau-Ponty, who challenges the psychologistic and empirical misconception that a body is objectively *in* space, ascribed with a set of coordinates or points, and/or symbolically understood through a shared language expressing predetermined knowledge about this body behaving in the world. Merleau-Ponty maintains through an extensive and unique "existential analysis" that the body "inhabits space and time" and is not in a relation of being in, beside or in front of space (Merleau-Ponty 2002, 161).

I am not in space or time, nor do I conceive space and time; I belong to them, my body combines with them and includes them. The scope of this inclusion is the measure of that of my existence (Merleau-Ponty 2002, 162).

Merleau-Ponty's discussion of the distinction between abstract and concrete movement in the case study of the neurologically-deficient patient Schneider in contrast with specific movement scenarios of a normal functioning patient develops this thesis.

Merleau-Ponty's analysis of existence is unlike the formalist ontology of Heidegger in which *Dasein*, as a symbol of existence and temporally owning oneself, is hermeneutically understood in and by a set of predetermined *a priori* structures expressing *Dasein's* relation and being in the world. On the contrary, the particularity of a body moving and understanding this belonging to an external world of objects, both animate and inanimate, presents the ongoing, synthesising disclosure of both a habituated and spontaneous world maker through our everyday comportments and intentional activities. These *world-horizons*, to invoke Merleau-Ponty again, are generated in and by 'us' as nothing other than our body: we are ourselves our bodies. Merleau-Ponty's discussion of a body's relation to space problematises the distance implied by the statement 'I am because I think' (famously, the Cartesian *Cogito*), along with other epistemological approaches that posit notions of self and self-identity from thought or other intellectual variations that pose solutions to self-knowledge. We cannot take for granted that spatiality always already belongs to us in our open negotiations with the world, including our unique spectatorial experiences in the theatre. To understand space is to understand the experience of our moving bodies, and due to this entwinement, the reverse logically holds true.

The Temporality of Audience

The study of 'space' and 'place' are significant with respect to understanding audiences. Within performance studies there has and continues to be a great deal of work in this area, whether through semiotic approaches to space or those inspired by Merleau-Ponty's understanding of spatiality.⁴⁴ However, little research has been devoted to the temporality or time experience of audiences in theatre and dance contexts, especially studies that draw upon thinkers from the phenomenology of time tradition. Investigation and debate about the 'problem of time perception' and the 'question of the possibility of time experience' occurred

⁴⁴ For more on space and place in Performance Studies see McAuley (1999); for a number of articles from authors with different philosophical perspectives directly addressing space and place in performance also see McAuley (2006). For a discussion of performer space, spatiality, place and landscape with particular references and influence from Merleau-Ponty see Kozel (2007), Hope (2010) & Shih-Pearson (2012). For more on phenomenological perspectives of space and spatiality from within audience see Sobchack (1992) and Grant (2007).

within the European phenomenological tradition amongst such eminent thinkers as Franz Brentano, Alexius Meinong, William Stern, William James and Edmund Husserl.⁴⁵ In reaction to Brentano's psychologism, Husserl attempted to further develop his thesis of *intentionality* through the "exposition of the intentional character of time-consciousness" (Heidegger 1928, 15).⁴⁶ The idea of subjective time is overlooked in its non-measurability within the physical sciences, where time is only understood in its objectively measured constitution.⁴⁷ Metaphysical and subjective notions of time remain a philosophical problem. There are numerous schools of thought that pertain philosophically to the concept and experience of time, and the Western philosophical tradition has problematised both in a number of ways. The relationship between objective and subjective time has been the topic of ongoing conceptual debate between different schools of thought since the early Greeks. Time, that slippery, ephemeral dimension has continued to elude definition. Within this tradition, the phenomenological view explicates the structure of temporal experience as lived phenomena. From this perspective, the question 'what is time' is understood in terms of the 'how' or 'way' of time: the constituting temporal process of thinking and being-in-the world itself.

Time, timings and temporality are prominent aspects of audience experience, necessitating research rich investigations that are not foreshadowed by studies of space or place.⁴⁸ Phenomenological reflections on the relationship between bodies and technologies in

⁴⁵ For a detailed discussion of time debates amongst these thinkers see Kortooms (2002).

⁴⁶ Husserl critiqued Brentano's assertion that the origin for the perception of time was psychological. Psychologism was the dominant empirical system of thought to explain the processes of thinking; Husserl became critical of its empirical approach, and the relegation of logical thinking to the subjective processes of thought. "The basic tendency of psychologism consisted in dissolving the tension in understanding truth one-sidedly in favour of subjectively situated achievements" (Held 2003, 11). Accordingly, psychologism denied universal logical truths an independent, objective existence from the mind.

⁴⁷ Physical scientists investigate time only in terms of its ability to objectively measure events. Subjective descriptions of time are vehemently disputed between relativists and quantum physicists, and frequently tied up with the problem of free will. Even though understanding the nature of time is a constant issue for physical scientists, they tend to leave this phenomenon aside. Einsteinian relativists maintain that the subjective feeling of time passing is an illusion, and yet, they are unable to account for the disjuncture that occurs in experience between apprehensions of clock time and feelings of time coming to pass.

⁴⁸ An event that did explore the potential of such analysis was the first International Academic and Art Conference *time · transcendence · performance* held in October 2009, presented by the School of English, Communications and Performance Studies at Monash University, Victoria, Australia. The purpose of this conference was to gather together artists, designers and thinkers who thematise time, timings or the temporal within their work. The three-day event tabled such questions as: How do performers think time? How do thinkers perform time? What shared or different understandings are at work in the different practices? Is time real or just an abstraction? Is it reversible? Does it pass? Do we experience it directly? Is it relative or constant? Does it exist? There were papers, panels, workshops and a curated stream of performances and exhibitions presented at several venues.

live, mediated performance insist upon a rigorous investigation of temporal experiences: the experiences of spectators conducting analysis. To not include the temporal dimension of experience in a study of aesthetic play would result in an impoverished asymmetrical study emphasising only the spatial dimensions of our experience. Phenomenological analysis must consider both these dimensions of experiences as they relate to the moment of participation in the given object-event. The essential structure of events relating to live and mediated forms at play with spectators in selected performance contexts are disclosed in and by a form of reflective attention to the spatio-temporal aspects of the spectator undertaking the phenomenological investigation. Moreover, the spectator's spatio-temporal experience is an embodied one: an investigation of spectatorial embodiment in their receptive turn of regard toward external phenomena.

Embodiment of Spectator-Analyst: preliminary remarks

To return to my former question, how, then, does a spectator occupy the dual role of researcher and immersed audience member without inhibiting or diluting the experience? A caveat for this dual occupation is that these experiences are adversely affected by specialised research methods that undermine the findings the investigation is attempting to reveal. In phenomenological studies, the experience of and reflection upon phenomena are instances of the production and imposition of a method: degrees of constraint on the observer in the opening toward phenomena to ascertain a certain type of evidence. In this respect, the research experience is one that is mediated by a particular method that encourages the right attitude for radical reflection. Once a chosen access to experience is formulated, reflection is proposed to be adequate, despite the limits of language and conceptualisation in description. Since Descartes' constitution of the personal pronoun 'I' on the basis of an irreducible ego that thinks, the question of self-identity, person, and more recently, self-awareness has been problematised by thinkers in the analytic and phenomenological traditions. Self-awareness is a major theme for phenomenology given that intentionality, consciousness about some object in the world, is its central doctrine. The question for phenomenology since Husserl has been: how does consciousness reflect upon itself in intentional consciousness? I see the squirrel. I hear the car screech to a halt. I smell banana bread. How do I reflect on the seeing, hearing and smelling? More fundamental to this self-awareness of intentional consciousness are the questions: how do I know that this sight is mine, that 'I' in fact am the hearer of the

screeching metal and rubber, or that the olfaction smelling the sweetness is mine? Moreover, how can I be aware that I am the subject 'I' referred to in statements such as 'I am hungry', 'I think . . .', 'I believe . . .'? What forms of reflection provide certitude and access to this self-awareness? And finally, is it even possible to adequately account for self-awareness? Dan Zahavi argues that

the subject-use of "I" never misfires, and that we consequently can never be mistaken when we claim to be self-aware [. . .] [i]n contrast to every fallible object-identification, the reference of "I" in first-person experience ascriptions is immediate, noncriterial, and noninferential (Zahavi 1999, 5).⁴⁹

The mediation of a particular method is common in other disciplines that attempt to understand aspects of empirical, social, and political experiences. Given the object of study for this dissertation is aesthetic phenomena, bodies in relation to technological media need to be experienced in such a way that the researcher is not an outside, detached observer, but a spectator having a direct and/or originary experience. For Husserl, "[n]atural cognition begins with experience and remains *within* experience" (Husserl in Welton 2000, 82), and for Kant there is no doubt "[t]hat all our knowledge begins with experience" (Kant 1982, 1).⁵⁰

In order to intuit, describe and analyse, the researcher must reflect upon their experiences for the eventual process of communicating this understanding and disclosing the shared essential structures of the phenomena under investigation. It is a phenomenological requirement. An external researcher never observes the spectator; the spectator is the phenomenologist. Hence, they experience a double call to attention, as audience member and analyst.

It is my conviction that through regular practice, the method and techniques of phenomenology in the 'performance stages' of the event will be concomitant to immersed spectatorial attendance. I expect that the techniques for understanding particular phenomena will become absorbed by the researcher in an embodied way over time. Consequently, researchers involved in the phenomenology work will become less conscious of and anxious about the dual responsibility of immersive receptivity and conducting the phenomenology. My embodied absorption of method may be likened to specific systems of technique

⁴⁹ For an excellent overview of this discussion see Zahavi (1999). For earlier arguments refuting the possibility of experiencing self-identity through the use of first-person pronoun, see Shoemaker (1963).

⁵⁰ I must note, that in the processes of imaginative variation within eidetic analysis some experiences are hypothetical and not given from an originary experience; they may be fictional, or loosely based on one or another's experience. I attend to this in Chapter 7.

embodied by dancers who use their technique as a resource for accessing and creating movement content. Closer to this idea is the embodied work of Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, who developed a system of exploratory exercises for dancers, physical performers, people with disabilities, and those disciplines interested in the moving body. Her research involves the intense mapping of early moving experiences derived from a *somatic* understanding of the body's discrete systems, both isolated and integrated (e.g. skeletal, organ, muscle, fluid and endocrine).⁵¹ Bainbridge's studies relate to the everyday moving body, and the elite body within specialist fields of sport and dance. This "framework for perceiving change in the moving body, [involving] a state of mind that allows for a spontaneous and open perception to our bodily mind", is called Body-Mind Centering (BMC) (Bainbridge Cohen 2008, vii). In the foreword to her book *Sensing, Feeling, and Action: The Experiential Anatomy of Body-Mind Centering* (2008), Bainbridge Cohen explains.

BMC merges the conceptual and experiential, shifting between observing and embodying. From this union arises an understanding, from the inside out and the outside in, of how an individual is doing or being *anything*, from batting a ball to arguing with your child (Bainbridge Cohen 2008, vii).

BMC requires the participant to be intentionally aware of the body moving in sensation. Exercises involve the direction of breath and creation of mental imagery around a changing, dynamic anatomy. Voluntary and involuntary movements—even at the level of organ and cellular function—are paid attention to by directing one's sensing capacities. Parts of one's anatomy are felt and able to be taken into action.⁵² The role of spectator is significant to understanding a work of art. Thus, to consider the essential structures of selected forms in relationship, the researcher as spectator needs to develop an adequate framework for being present in audience, like the BMC practitioner's intentional awareness of somatic systems.

⁵¹ The following definition of somatics by Thomas Hanna considers the first-person subjective and third-person objective perspectives of body perception.

Somatics is the field which studies the *soma*: namely the body as perceived from within by first-person perception. When a human being is observed from the outside—i.e. from a third-person viewpoint—the phenomenon of a human *body* is perceived. But when this same human being is observed from the first person viewpoint of his own proprioceptive senses, a categorically different phenomenon is perceived: the human *soma* (Hanna 1995, 341).

⁵² I believe that the techniques like BMC counter, or at least explore ways in which to counter, Drew Leder's observation that the body is "absent from experience" (Leder 1990, 69). For Leder, the body and its everyday perception is generally one of "being away", "absent", a body of "dys-appearance". Interestingly he argues that the phenomenological experience of body reinforces the problematic body-mind distinction. There are many examples of movement practices and 'body work' that attempt to overcome our experiential disembodiment, including authentic dance styles, yoga approaches, Alexander Technique and Feldenkrais.

Such a framework is by no means fixed, nor easily defined. We can begin with a proposed method and a set of guidelines for approaching the phenomenological task at hand; however, the techniques practised within the unfolding of an experience inevitably change as they are more comfortably absorbed and embodied as one's own. Like learning any new skill, the methods of phenomenology become structural aspects of the 'doing' person's consciousness. By and large, it is through phenomenology that we find the most flexible and open approach to understanding the complex structures and relations of all experiential aspects of a mediated performance event.

In this chapter, I have considered the possibility for an ontology of art where the aesthetic forms are in complex interactive relations with spectators in a performance context. Rather than restoring ontology as I originally set out to do, I raised a number of issues with philosophical ontology through Heidegger, and an approach combining logic and applied science with Jacques-Lacoue-Labarthe. I also recognised my position to be similar to Auslander and his program to de-ontologise the debate between live and mediated forms. Acknowledging that we arrive at a similar perspective, we do so by theoretically distinct means. My turn to Gadamer and his concept of *play* reinstated audience in the phenomenological understanding of these aesthetic forms, a role that takes on the dual occupation of both spectator and analyst. To understand bodies and technologies in complex relationships without the burden of ontology, I methodologically pursue phenomenology in a narrow sense, as a "phenomenology of constitution": "Phenomenology in the narrow sense as a phenomenology of constitution. Phenomenology in the wide sense as something which includes ontology" (Heidegger 1982, 2). A phenomenology of constitution enables the experiential study of objects given in the world, and within events. From this understanding I undertake a phenomenology of encounters occurring within an object-event.

The following chapter provides a theoretical background to transcendental phenomenology, leading towards my practical use of this approach.

Before developing a phenomenological framework for examining interactions between bodies and technologies in dance performance to be outlined in Chapter 5, I will take some time to introduce Husserl's transcendental phenomenology. In order to do this, I will look closely at some basic tenets of his philosophy drawn from the breadth of his works, and seek assistance from leading commentators on his phenomenology, including Anthony J. Steinbock, Klaus Held, Robert Sokowski, Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, and Donn Welton.

§2.3.1 TRANSCENDENTAL PHENOMENOLOGY

Phenomenology describes the essential structure of objects and how they are experienced in the world. These objects of experience include physical, concrete things that are independently *given* in the world; and mental acts experienced as thinking, remembering, expecting, imaging and imagining. The *givenness* of an object or mental act is the way in which something appears, and is inextricable from actual perceiving; the perceived thing and perception cannot be separated.⁵³ Phenomenology considers *how* something is constituted. The existence of an object is secondary to the multiple ways in which something appears to us in experience.

Phenomenology is a broad practice and has, since Husserl, evolved and moved in many different directions. As a result, there is a marked variance in concepts classically associated with phenomenology across the work of different scholars.⁵⁴

The purpose of the following chapter is to introduce concepts that are relevant to developing and informing my particular working method in phenomenological aesthetics. I will begin by taking a brief look at the structure of intentionality and the phenomenological and eidetic reductions, I then discuss three different, though closely related, methods in Husserlian transcendental phenomenology as identified by Anthony J. Steinbock: the static,

⁵³ See also Husserl (1983, 7, 35, 36, 43, 48, 79, 126, 127, 129, 191, 254, 282, 298) for specific characterisations of givenness in respect to Husserl's development of transcendental phenomenology.

⁵⁴ My time as a research fellow at the Phenomenology Research Center under the directorship of Anthony J. Steinbock has deepened my understanding of phenomenology, and clarified areas of initial confusion. My methodological approach has been greatly influenced by his scholarship.

genetic, and generative; and raise well-known issues and countenances relating to Husserl's philosophy, including the often-raised critique of Husserl as an essentialist.

In the introductory section to his *Ideas I* (First Book), Husserl invites the phenomenologist of any discipline to actively turn toward their specific interests in a similar *manner* to that which he outlines. "Applied phenomenology", by necessity, "determines the ultimate sense of the 'being' of its objects" (Husserl 1983, 142). I will now explicate Husserl's 'manner' before turning that manner to my own specific, aesthetic interest.

Intentionality

Husserl's thesis of intentionality is central to phenomenology.⁵⁵ Intentionality belongs to consciousness, such that consciousness is always directed toward some object. Within acts of perception, intentionality's tripartite structure of act, content and object underlies the relationship between a perceiver, their perceiving and the perceived. The perceived is constituted in several ways by many individual constituting consciousnesses, and may be a physical or mental object, such as that tree before me, or, to cite psychologist Franz Clemens Brentano's famous example of an *inexistent*, the idea of a unicorn. The intentional structure of perception describes the natural world in readiness for a phenomenological reduction, and the positing of a more immanent field of pure consciousness.

Husserl formulated the three-part intentional structure in response to the problem of non-existent objects in perception. Preceding Husserl on this matter, Brentano (1838-1917) attempted to solve the problem of inexistence with his relational model of intentionality, worked out in his text *Psychology from An Empirical Standpoint* (1911). Brentano was curious as to how to account for thoughts about objects that do not exist in external reality: the case of intentional inexistence. His relational theory accounts for existent and nonexistent objects. There is, Brentano argues, always an object, whether physical or mental, in relation to the mental act itself. The problematic raised with regards to these two types of objects proceeds with the following questions: if I am having a mental act (perception) about the tree in my backyard, is this mental act 'different' to my imagining of a unicorn, which does not

⁵⁵ Throughout this document, when I use the terms 'intention' and/or 'intended', I am exclusively referring to intentionality. I will use the term 'motivation' when talking generally about a person's intention to do something.

exist independent of the mental act itself? How can we adequately account for thoughts about inexistents? What methods are available for such an inquiry? Brentano's most famous passage from *Psychology* highlights the historical problem of intentional inexistence.

Every mental phenomenon is characterised by what the Scholastics of the Middle Ages called the intentional (or mental) inexistence of an object, and what we might call, though not wholly unambiguously, reference to a content, direction towards an object (which is not to be understood here as meaning a thing) or immanent objectivity. *Every mental phenomenon includes something as object within itself, although they do not all do so in the same way.* In presentation, something is presented, in judgment something is affirmed or denied, in love loved, in hate hated, in desire desired and so on (Brentano 1973, 88, *italics mine*).

For Husserl, however, inexistence was no problem at all. His tripartite structure of intentionality supports the idea that all intentional states are always 'about' existent or non-existent things—such as mental phenomena—but are not strictly relational in the manner that Brentano had proposed. Husserl's intentionality extends to entities and statements of belief where there is no object in relation to the mental act, such as 'Santa Claus lives at the North Pole'. Every thought is always 'consciousness of something' and for Husserl, it is the structure of this directedness that is of primary significance.

The fact that there is no evidence that Santa Claus (the rotund individual in a red suit with a white beard who manages to fly around the globe in a single evening and deliver presents to every good boy and girl) physically exists in like manner to the tree in front of me offers no exception to Husserl's understanding of the structure of intentionality. The act is my perceiving of something; the content is the "structural feature or property of the act" that verifies that the state of affairs obtains, or not, or that the object exists, or does not. The object (existent or not) is that which the intention is about, that of which we have consciousness (Christensen 2001, 11). The content will verify whether a belief is right or wrong, a desire is fulfilled or unfulfilled, or if a perception is veridical or non-veridical. For Husserl, intentional states do not simply refer to existents. The layers inherent to a consciousness about something—when I perceive that thing before me, or my own conscious mental acts—are temporally and structurally complex and cannot be adequately accounted for by a science concerned only with the perceived (physical sciences), or with the mental acts involved in perceiving an objectified phenomena (empirical psychology).

Rather than living in the perception, adverted to the perceived in considering and theorising they [empirical scientists] do not manage to direct the regard instead to the perceiving, or to their own peculiarities of the *mode* of givenness of the perceived, and to take what is offered in analysis of something immanent with respect to its essence, just as it is given (Husserl in Welton 1999b, 87).

Husserl was motivated to account for this fundamental mediating relationship between subjects and objects in the world. He called this descriptive science phenomenology.

Phenomenology in this specific, technical sense pays close attention to the structure of *intending* experiencing from within experience itself. All intending experience is *about* something external or internal to perception: I intend that apple to eat; I intend that thought about an apple I will eat later when I am hungry; I intend that mountain to climb; I intend that goal of surmounting Mount Kosciuszko one day in the future; I intend that person to love; I intend someone who has intelligence and humour to fall in love with. The qualitative scale of differences between these statements of intended experience invite a rigorous method of description to illuminate how they are given in experience, and the distinctions and connections structurally inherent to these phenomena. However, they are emphasised: eating, apples, hunger, climbing, mountains, Mount Kosciuszko, that person, our relationship, love, or the emotions more generally.

The Phenomenological Reduction

The *ego meditans* is born from a double reduction:
the transcendental of the being of the world
and the eidetic reduction of the factual ego.

Paul Ricoeur 2007 *Husserl: An Analysis of his Phenomenology* (108)

Husserlian transcendental phenomenology involves a radical method of exclusion to arrive at a *field of pure consciousness* (Husserl 1983, 134). Just how far the exclusion goes depends upon the type of investigation undertaken. Husserl's project was to methodically critique the natural sciences and their corresponding *transcendental objectivities* in order to describe the *immanent consciousness-formations*. Immanence presupposes all transcendent activity, and through phenomenological reductions this distinction between transcendence and immanence becomes delineated. It is not without some confusion that the terms transcendence and immanence differ markedly between philosophers. Husserl uses this distinction in a very specific and complex way and is a necessary feature of his phenomenology, without which the reductions, as an analytic enterprise, would not function.

Immanent objects—such as our lived experiences—are originally self-given and require no exclusion (Husserl 2001, 577-581). That which gives itself to internal perception (such as a self-perceiving consciousness) may be described as belonging to the world in an immanent way, whereas for something to be given external to perception it belongs to the world in a transcendent way. A transcendent object “feigns to give the object completely [one-sidedly] in every appearance”, while in actual fact, it is given in many ways to different perceivers. “There is always *more* (from the side of the object)” to what the perceiver can seek meaning from (Steinbock 1995, 23). A transcendent quality goes beyond the singular appearance of the thing perceived; there is always something extra, a *plus ultra* of that perception. Our ‘non-immanent’ intuiting of a transcendent object fails to posit that thing as existing. Hence, since it can be otherwise, it has a dubitable existence. To save the world from a transcendental collapse, Husserl posits that immanence (the indubitable absolute with *non-perspectival* objective sense) is always already the ground for transcendence. Immanence and transcendence are formulated in an inextricable relation. Husserl reasons that in perceiving an object, the perception (the lived experience of that perceiving) is itself an immanent object, while the thing perceived could either not exist (we could be having a hallucination about that thing), or that it could be perspectively otherwise in appearance.

This object that has been given to consciousness does not give itself as an immanent object, and it is nothing less than contained in an intimately inherent manner in the *percepti*. To be sure, one says with good reason that despite the fact that they are perceived, perceptual, bodily things do not have to exist: It could turn out later that the perception was a deceptive one (Husserl 2001, 579).

Salvaging immanence from the dubitable rubble of transcendental objectivities is a priority for Husserl, and is sought through a transcendental reduction.

In his earliest positing of the phenomenological reductions in *Ideas I*⁵⁶, Husserl goes almost all the way with his radical technique of suspension or *epoché* (also referred to as parenthesis or bracketing), and peels through the layers of objective transcendencies to a positing of immanence, the *pure ego*. These transcendent objectivities include the natural world, the “physical and psychophysical world” and “all sorts of cultural formations [. . .] the technical and fine arts [. . .] aesthetic and practical values of every form [. . .] actualities as state, custom, law, religion [. . .] all natural sciences and cultural sciences” (Husserl 1983, 131). Second to this rudimentary suspension of the natural world in which intentional experience of objects takes place, Husserl questions whether pure ego—once the human being as person in association with society is excluded—can escape this process of exclusion. It escapes, insofar as, it is not constituted. Only when pure ego is immediate and given inextricably and inherently along with pure consciousness, can it be included as phenomenological reduced datum (Husserl 1983, 133). Thus, all theories about pure ego that are non-immanent suppositions are excluded. Next to go in this method of exclusion is God. All rationalising grounds that identify “an extra-worldly divine being” as spiritual originator of constituted consciousness and are transcendent of both the natural world and absolute consciousness are bracketed along with posited divinity, whatever its form.

Following the phenomenological reduction of the natural world, human beings, non-immediate pure egos and every version of God, Husserl wonders just how far he can go: “let us attempt the maximum possible exclusion of the eidetic and consequently a like exclusion of all eidetic sciences” (Husserl 1983, 135). With this move, all *universal objects of essences* are excluded, as they are “transcendent to pure consciousness [. . .] [and] not to be found [. . .] inherent within it” (Husserl 1983, 135). Interestingly in Husserl’s method of doubt, the idea of pure consciousness, or the sense of what it possibly could be, is founded upon that which it

⁵⁶ I will continue to use this shorthand title when referring to Husserl’s First Book (*Ideas I*) and Second Book (*Ideas II*) of the *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*.

is not. Up until now, exclusion of the material objectivities that we know of as denoting world are suspended momentarily (albeit, not eradicated) in order to be able to stand before the world with others (being-in-world for Heidegger; moving-in-world for Merleau-Ponty) and see it for *how* it is from within the experience. It is a revelatory stance that brokers the distance between things in the world and their perceiver, and in the case of aesthetic experience, between the perceiver, the art work and their *re-presentations*: “memory, expectation, phantasy (or imagination) and image consciousness” (Brough 2005, XXX), but more on this later.

Returning to what counts as *material* eidetic sciences—and furthering the narrative of what needs to be excluded by the phenomenological reduction—“algebra”, “theory of number” and “theory of manifolds” are precluded in this transcendently cleared field; they are of no use to phenomenology since the investigations of pure consciousness are presupposed by “a descriptive analysis which can be solved in pure intuition” (Husserl 1983, 137). This final flex of the reductive muscle will be enough to carry out investigations without the occluding yoke of transcendent objectivities. Husserl contends that:

[i]f we intend to develop a phenomenology as a *purely descriptive eidetic doctrine of the immanent consciousness-formations*, the occurrences in the stream of mental processes which can be seized upon within the boundaries drawn by phenomenological exclusion, then no transcendent individuals and, *therefore, none of the “transcendent essences”* belonging within those boundaries are included (Husserl 1983, 137-8).

Eidetic Reduction

As has been shown, the transcendental-phenomenological reduction (*epoché*) is the excavation of “brute fact” that contributes to a particularised view of the world, whether scientific, mystical or bleak, and may be observed as our natural attitude.⁵⁷ What happens in this first-stage reduction is an initial parenthesising (mental exclusion) of that which could be otherwise. Dubitable contingencies included in this exclusion (to reiterate) are physical objects (existent and non-existent), human beings, non-immediate pure egos, God, and theories of the material-eidetic sciences. This initial reduction presents to the phenomenologist a transcendently-cleared field of phenomena for engaging a second stage reduction known as the *eidetic reduction* (sometimes called *eidetic intuition* or *eidetic variation*).

The eidetic reduction is the practice or method of acquiring insight into the essence of a constituted thing and an experiencing consciousness. It is the necessary step in a transcendental phenomenology to “identify fundamental structures, rules or conditions for the possibility of sense-emergence” (Steinbock 1995, 14). For the universal to be freed from contingencies inherent to the empirical, a volitional process of *free variation* within imagination must be run through (like a cartoon flip book) in order to seek the original image that is retained. This is the original image (or general essence) to the “multiplicity of successive” images that we move through in free variation, and to which “all the variants coincide”: we call this the *eidetic invariant* (Husserl in Welton 1999, 292-3).

The relationship between *imaginative free variation* and *eidetic invariance* are important features of my phenomenology of bodies interacting with technologies in live, mediatised events, and is evidenced in my later analysis of participants’ writings in Chapter 7. I view the textual accounts (language of experience) to be involved in this process of free variation. The significance and technique of an eidetic reduction is best understood through practice.

⁵⁷ From Ricoeur (2007b, 26). It is worthwhile noting here, that the natural attitude can only be identified from within the phenomenological attitude.

In the preceding sections I stepped through the most basic tenets of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology, considering briefly intentionality, the relationship between immanence and transcendence, Husserl's transcendental-phenomenological reduction, and hinted at the processes of free variation within his second stage eidetic reduction. Presenting a methodology in a discipline other than philosophy is a difficult undertaking. I do not build upon Husserl's phenomenology or any one of his concepts as a Husserlian scholar would, by forensically sifting through his manuscripts, translated or not from the German.⁵⁸ Rather, my project should be viewed as a pragmatic exercise in developing Transcendental Phenomenology in application. By delimiting this study to an aesthetic domain, some findings may raise ethical questions of a cultural and/or political nature. In the event of such extrapolation, my phenomenological analysis will move closer to what Steinbock identifies as generative analysis—a third *regressive* method in Husserl's transcendental phenomenology, to be discussed in an upcoming section.

Digital haptics, for example, is one area that my research illuminates from within an aesthetic context. Haptics is a field of study that considers 'touch feedback' and has traditionally been centered upon human touch. In my project, the significance of touch is nowhere presupposed other than in the evidence of an encounter of touch. It is through phenomenological investigation that the experiences of touch are eidetically seized. Each moment is delicately unpacked by flicking through multiple embodied imaginings communicated through the language of experience: a process of *free variation*. The essential structure and/or connections are identified through textual analysis, and further elaborated upon in terms of their generativity or historical development.

Where a dancer interacts with their digital double in a multi-dimensional comingling of the corporeal and virtual, this relationship becomes not only restricted to the possibility of the co-generative creation of new material (movements/choreographies emerging between a dancer in a duet with a digital representation of themselves as *digital double*⁵⁹), but leads to a

⁵⁸ The Husserliana Manuscripts are stored at the Husserl-Archives in Leuven. The manuscripts are indexed from A-R, Volumes 1- 40 and have mostly been translated from German to English. The following volumes remain untranslated: 13, 14, 15, 26, 27, 29 (The New Crisis), 32, 33 (Time papers), 35 (Introduction to Philosophy), 38 (On Attention), 39 (On the Lifeworld). For more on published sections of the Manuscripts see Husserl-Archives Leuven, International Center for Phenomenological Research <http://www.hiw.kuleuven.be/hiw/eng/husserl/>.

⁵⁹ A digital double in performance is a "technological reflection of a live body [. . .] a digital image that mirrors the identical visual form and real time movement of the performer or interactive user" (Dixon 2007, 250).

questioning of the distinctive qualitative experiences of touch and touching between humans and digital technologies.⁶⁰ It is not the task of this dissertation to understand why an experience of touch might be significant beyond the aesthetic domain, or beyond the performance itself. Philosophically I am interested in elaborating the relationship between bodies and technologies through an eidetic analysis of their essential structure. However, I am cognisant that non-aesthetic-based discussions will emerge as a development upon my more preparatory and methodological enterprise. An interest in the being of these forms delimited by selected case studies within an aesthetic context does not prevent me from hinting at the ethico-cultural dimensions of the encounters that are thematised phenomenologically during the investigation.

My study does not take the experience of the dancer as its primary interest; rather, it is focused upon understanding the relationship between the dancer and his/her mediated other from the perspective of audience.⁶¹ Here, we strike quite different results, and so my approach to phenomena becomes distinctive. Were I attempting to work from inside the relationship between the dancer and their digital double it could be argued that I was attempting to understand the relationship from a third-party perspective. The difficulties—if not impossibility—of a third-person attempt to know other minds or describe their experience prevents me from orienting the investigation from this place within the encounter. Central to perspective, however, are the shared experiences from within audience outside and/or alongside the immediate and qualitative relationship between a dancer and their technologically produced partner. These shared experiences are communicated through writings about the experience of the encounter: say, a dancer stepping inside their digital double's holographic skin. The role of audience is central to the constitution of the event as aesthetic.

Cases of digital touch presented in this dissertation are not arrested from their aesthetic context or considered beyond their purpose as performances. As has been

⁶⁰ Here I avoid the blanket term Technology with a capital T, as Paul Verbeek recognises in *What Things Do: philosophical reflections on technology, agency, and design* (1970). Technology is “the specifically modern, “science-based technological devices of the sort that began to emerge in the last century” (Verbeek 2005, 3). For the most part I refer to the types of digital technologies that are used in performances, where visual or sound objects are invariably manipulated, modified or mediated through a computer. However I will be specific whenever analogue equipment or techniques are used such as a classic slide projector or analogue data from old camera equipment. For stylistic considerations I use the terms digital technologies, technologies and dance technologies interchangeably.

⁶¹ For very good reason, most phenomenological studies are undertaken from the dancer's perspective that is oriented towards their experience of moving, relations to space, time, other dancing bodies, technologies, and /or the audience. See here Sheets-Johnstone (1984), Fraleigh (1987), Kozel (2007).

suggested, to inquire into their ethical, social or political dimensions is an entirely different project that would need to consider the interactions between humans and technology within the everyday.⁶² Empirical or philosophical studies of human computer interaction are useful in the more restricted discussions about performance phenomena, but are no substitute to undertaking direct phenomenological study of audience within an aesthetic context.

As I have suggested, Auslander locates this discussion within a notion of cultural-economy as a strategy of de-ontologisation, but is unable to apprehend these forms, in and by themselves, or in their meaningful and structural relationship with audiences. As already discussed, I extend this discussion beyond a historico-cultural study of theatre and television, and beyond the debate between those who venerate the live and those who see no distinction between the live and mediated, and focus upon the relationship rather than the distinction between bodies and newer technologies in performance contexts. I do, however, use the debate as a point of departure for this phenomenologically constructive elaboration. As Badiou would recognise, I am “deliciously isolated by amorous constructions” in my attempt to understand the being of these forms in their essential relationships (Badiou 2005, xv).

⁶² Studies that consider interactions between humans and computers investigate (non-exhaustively) the following technologies and their impact on everyday human subjectivity: computer wearables— mobile telephones, smart phones, blue-tooth technologies; game technologies—televsual and hand-held devices; web-based and social networking technologies—the Internet, facebook, twitter, chatrooms, blogging sites, Second Life; and home digital entertainment—televsual devices, home projection, Blu-ray and sound systems.

The phenomenology of transcendence is an experiential analysis for understanding dynamic possibilities in the way the world takes on sense. The three methods in Husserl's transcendental phenomenology identified by Steinbock are the static, genetic, and generative. I will now discuss each in turn.

Static Method

Husserl's static method describes that which is immanent in negative spatial terms. How does he do this, and what is missing in this description? Throughout *Ideas I*, Husserl accounts for the primary and secondary qualities of objects in spatial terms. He describes the motility of perception when walking around a table: the perception (appearance of the table) continues to change while its factual existence remains unchanged (Husserl 1983, 86). The spatial adumbrations of the table in the continuity of perception or in a completely new perception of the same object (following a moment of closing one's eyes) are given in an entirely different way. For Husserl these are non-immanent features that are dubitable and susceptible to being excluded. Immanent objects of perception do not spatially adumbrate beyond themselves because they are always already adequately given. They are characterised in non-spatial terms to avoid attributions of transcendence: systems of adumbration that point beyond necessity. Steinbock notes that in Husserl's earlier figurations of immanent objects, they are not described in "positive" temporal terms (Steinbock 1995, 30)

Genetic method: active and passive synthesis

What is methodologically significant in the temporal reckoning of immanent objects and individuals is the dynamic movement from stasis to genesis. Static phenomenology is delimited by (1) constitutive analysis: the way or how something is given, and by (2) eidetic analysis: the structural possibilities of an object and its essence. Both (1) and (2) occur without examining how the phenomenon originates or develops in the processes of the perceiver, which is always already a temporal movement (Husserl in Steinbock 1995, 39) For Husserl, the importance of the constituting subject in static phenomenology is limited to how the subject emerges in and through the constituted. When the relationship between constituted and constituting is static, the phenomenological description does not inquire beyond this experience to the origins and shadings of a *self-temporalising* subject. In the

1905 Lectures, Husserl acknowledges a complex process of becomings in any single experience without developing the genetic structure of self-temporalisation apparent in his later works.⁶³ The distinctive architecture of genesis for individual egos is not the abstract model of time consciousness found within Husserl's earlier text; rather, it is a phenomenology of "primordial phenomena" and their associations.⁶⁴ Primordial phenomena include "motivations, apperception and affective association" (Steinbock 1995, 41).

Constitutive and structural eidetic analyses are methodologically important for considering the interactions between bodies and technologies in phenomenological terms. Even though these encounters may be qualitatively described more simply as a co-relation between the constituted and constituting in static analyses, my appeal to a non-foundational transcendental phenomenology situates this project, for the most part, in genetic phenomenology.

The genetic and self-temporalising dimension of Husserl's philosophy is a vast system of complex conceptual distinctions. To proceed with explanation would lead me further from the task at hand. Instead, the following points summarise the main tenets of Husserl's genetic analyses and highlight concepts from his system that directly assist my inquiry:

- 1) Genetic philosophy (genesis) is understood as the self-temporalising character of lived experience.
- 2) There are three levels of genesis: (i) passive (ii) passive—active (iii) and active.

Working backwards:

- 3) In active genesis (iii), a subject will constitute both ideal and real objects through "rational acts" in the form of mathematical judgments, deduction, predication and

⁶³ The genetic structure of consciousness in temporal terms is most worked out in the time manuscripts that form the translation *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis: Lectures on Transcendental Logic* (Husserl 2001).

⁶⁴ In the 1905 Lectures on Time, Husserl elaborates time experience through his model of time consciousness presented as a system of temporal modifications that describe transitions between now-points. These modifications account for present impressions; the past as a particular style of "run-off" (memories, remembering, recollection and representifications), and the future as a system of protentions (expectations and phantasy). See Husserl (1964).

the formation of objects that constitute culture, such as books, works of art, galleries, theatres and so on (Steinbock 1995, 41).

- 4) The relation between passive and active perception (ii) is a transitional becoming; *objectifying acts* of attention are raised from states of passive affectivity.⁶⁵ We pay attention to the affect of becomings in the transition from passive to active perception, like when we hear a loud noise and retro-actively turn towards its origin. Mathematical theorems or geometrical shapes originate in the experience of spatial shapes; number and sense connections are the “the founding layers of validity” in mathematical judgments (Steinbock 1995, 43).
- 5) Passive genesis (i) occurs in *aesthesis*: the vague territories of bodily sense and sensation. Steinbock identifies two aspects of passive genesis that are useful guides for grasping activity occurring in these most basic states of passivity. For an object given under passive genesis we consider our kinesthesia: “the modes of orientation of space and time” in relation to the lived-moving-body. What are the proximal and positional relationships that we sense in relation to constituted objects in perception?

⁶⁵ In *Ideas II*, Husserl identifies three distinct objectifying acts within lived experience: theoretical, valuing and willing. Theoretical acts (as ‘spontaneous acts’) are already preceded by objectivities, which are pre-given in consciousness. Objectifying *theoretical acts* (doxic-theoretic) are active intentional acts of representing, judging and thinking. *Categorial* objectivities are antecedent and “constituted in the precedent theoretical acts” (Husserl 1989, 7). These prior laid objectivities are caught in the temporal concatenation of constituted theoretical acts and are pre-given for every corresponding new act: “objects which for the first time will become theoretical are already, in a certain manner, laid out there in advance” (Husserl 1989, 8). Valuing acts take place in the affective sphere and include positions of being pleased or displeased. To live in rapture, delight or pleasure of an object is an objective *valuing-act*. “We can look at a picture with delight. Then we are living in the performance of aesthetic pleasure, in the pleasure attitude, which is precisely one of delight” (Husserl 1989, 10). Valuing acts occur prior to a theoretical ‘grasping’ of an object that then describes the object in terms of this or that art tradition. Pre-given objectivities relating to value-acts are *spontaneous products* and are originally constituted within the synthesis of the specific-act itself. For example, while watching Israeli choreographer Hofesh Schecter’s work *Political Mother* (2010), I became kinaesthetically absorbed with a movement motif of raised arms and wrists limply floating above the dancers’ heads in a soft, swaying unison. I experienced bodily warmth, a thickening in the throat, and empathetic sensations in my armpits and wrists; I felt pleasure; or, as Husserl would identify, I was in the “active abandon of the being-occupied-with-it-in-aesthetic-pleasure, in the aesthetic enjoyment, understood as act, the object is, as we said, the object of delight” (Husserl 1989, 10). This *value-reception* of feelings occurs before any kind of aesthetic judgment. As a dance critic and choreographer, I aesthetically judge the movement with reference to the idiom and traditions of contemporary and folk dance. The value-act as a distinct form of objectifying act from the theoretical is a region in Husserl’s phenomenology of great interest. Certain aspects emanating from the *sphere of feelings*, in their vague, non-theoretical, pre-judged dimension, inform analysis in my study of encounters between bodies and technology in performance. For more on willing as an objectifying act, see Husserl (1989, 8-9).

It has sense for me by being near or far to my lived-body, left or right, above or below, in front or in back; it can be in motion or rest by virtue of my lived-body as a point of orientation, which is to say a zero-point of sense givenness (Steinbock 1995, 42).

Through genetic analyses it is possible to see the world as possessing a “depth structure” (Steinbock 1995, 42). This non-prescribed, but described depth structure is an important feature in the spatio-temporal relationship between the lived-moving-body as audience perceiver and the various constituted dimensions of the mediated performer who may vacillate between being flattened in two-dimensions or brought in a holographic form to three.

In the *Primacy of Movement*, Maxine Sheets-Johnstone asserts *self-movement* as the epistemological locus of our true experience of the animate world, and does so through a phenomenology of the moving body. In the opening paragraph of her book, Sheets-Johnstone states her purpose:

[t]his book is about movement [. . .] It is about how movement is the root of our sense of agency and how it is the generative source of our notions of space and time. It is about how self-movement structures knowledge of the world—how moving is a way of knowing and how thinking in movement is foundational to the lives of animate forms
(Sheets-Johnstone 1999, xv).

With this focus, Sheets-Johnstone remedies Husserl’s failure to provide an adequate account of kinesthesia in *Ideas II* and *III*.

Husserl does not actually consider self-movement as such; he considers only movement with respect to external perception, that is, with respect to perceived objects in the world. His estimation of kinesthesia is clearly restricted [. . .] A descriptive account of the sheer phenomenon of *self-movement* as it is experienced kinesthetically is distinctly by-passed
(Sheets-Johnstone 1999, 140).

What is distinct about my approach is being able to account for kinesthesia in external objects, relations outside of the embodied perceiver, that are empathetically or imaginatively describing a body ‘over there’ from a position ‘here’. Thus, an adequate account of kinesthesia for both the constituted and constituting is required. In saying this, I incorporate Sheets-Johnstone’s thesis of self-movement and attempt to extend Husserl’s descriptive account of kinesthesia in external perception. The following chapter on embodiment will develop this position further.

The second aspect of passive genesis to note is *kinesthetic motivation*: the transformations for movement.⁶⁶ To take an example: if while cycling I see a short, steep ramp ahead of me, I can inquire into my understanding of this ramp with the assertion that “I can” cycle to the top. My assertion correlates with a process where one movement motivates another to steer the bike and conquer the ramp, rather than an intellectual reasoning of whether I could/could not, should/should not.⁶⁷ Here, in the act of cycling, I intend the ramp differently in my motivation to get to the top. It also differs from the perceptual experience of walking past the ramp and seeing it as a feature of the raised landscape. In Husserlian terms, this unfolding motivation within movement is an aspect of *apperception*.

- (i) Apperceptions are intentional lived experiences that are conscious of something as perceived, but are themselves not self-given in these lived-experiences (Husserl in Welton 1999b, 316). In the original perception of lived experiences, such as that tree before me, apperceptions are not self-given in the immediacy of perception as it appears as a tree over there, but determines new features in the temporal unfolding of my motivation towards the tree, such as the tree becomes possible to climb, to chop down, or to move around because it is an obstacle.
- (ii) The law relating to apperceptions in motivation concerns future possibilities: “a possible continuation of the stream of consciousness, one that is ideally possible” (Husserl in Welton 1999b, 316). With the example of cycling to the top of a ramp, I intend the ramp futurally and apperceptively in the ‘I can’ of my kinesthetic motivation, and this is based upon past experiences of surmounting ramps with a similar gradient.

⁶⁶ See “The Aesthetic in their Relation to the Aesthetic Body” in *Ideas II* (Husserl 1989)

⁶⁷ This is not to say these deliberations do not go on, especially in the experience of the new rider who may be more intellectually engaged with their riding while negotiating the terrain.

6) There are particular laws regulating activity in genesis. These *Laws of Association* regulate the “sequences of particular events in the stream of lived experience” (Husserl in Welton 1999b, 316). Prior to becoming objectivated in sense-constitution, objects are sensuous data forming a *field of sense*. A field of sense as an articulated-unity-of-sensuous-data is never taken as an object in itself. Take for example the optical field of sense and our experiencing of colour. When I look at a painted red wall, I see white patches on this background. In the unity of experiencing this immediate perception, both the red wall and white patches are visual data. This is the homogeneity thesis of a field of sense. The white patches contrast with the red background, “but with one another they blend without contrast” (Husserl 1973, 73). What Husserl means is that in immediate perception the colours are similar to one another as visual data; however, on closer inspection, we realise the white patches are not spots of colour but light reflections. Thus, a difference is found within the associations of the perception, rather than a second-order association of similarity that they are both colours. An important aspect of the overall synthesis of visual perception is that there is no “complete likeness” in this experience.⁶⁸

But all immediate association is an association in accordance with similarity. Such association is essentially possible only by virtue of similarities, differing in degree in each case, up to the limit of complete likeness (Husserl 1973, 75).

A field of sense possesses a determinative structure: “one of prominences and articulated particularities” and is not a nebulous sea of unstructured discontinuities (Husserl 1973, 72). Sense data are united into homogenous groups or *unities of identity* heterogeneous to each other, and are “already the product of a constitutive synthesis” (Husserl 1973, 73). For the earlier Husserl, an even lower level of passivity understood as time-consciousness presupposes this field of sense.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Interestingly, ‘differences in similarity’ contrasted to a ‘complete likeness’ is a useful law of association to consider in the debate about whether there are ontological differences between live and mediated forms. Used in response to Auslander’s claim that there is no ontological distinction because they participate in the same cultural economy, these laws of association indicate the surface play that takes place in his theoretical attempts to de-ontologise. The phenomena are already presupposed by a particular understanding of the cultural-historical condition of these forms, reified in a particular light and never experienced or described in their genesis as sharing ‘differences in similarity’. At the level of association, it seems that Auslander is too quick to view these forms at their “limit of complete likeness”.

⁶⁹ By identifying a generative method in Husserl’s phenomenology, Steinbock acknowledges a more founding level to time consciousness and affective allure in passive activity: the inter-personal relation of being struck by another. Max Scheler identifies this underdeveloped aspect of Husserl and reinstates emotion as the source of value in feeling, steering phenomenology away from the rational aspects of human existence (Scheler 1973).

Leaving aside the much larger discussion of time-consciousness, we can proceed by considering the two universal laws of association in genesis: *succession* and *coexistence*. These two laws relate to earlier understandings of perception in Husserl where a field of prominences *affects an allure* on the perceiver. From my cycling example: let us say I steer the bike toward the ramp not because that is the direction I need to go, but because the ramp exerts a force on my attention.⁷⁰

- 7) Consider the following example for the law of *succession*: I am cycling at night through the woods and happen to see a skunk crossing the road. The skunk visually represented as (S) emerges as an enduring object of primal impression in my initial perception. S then runs into the woods as headlights (H) emerge on the bend coming towards me. The skunk is no longer a primal impression, but recedes into the past as a primary memory or retention. The headlights H now become constituted as enduring object until the car passes and the headlights move off into the distance. What has occurred here is a non-causal relationship of succession in the primary impressions of S followed by H. We can in the freedom of our consciousness tie the two impressions together as a successive event in the every expanse-of-a-presence: S followed by H, S-H. Not only do we have consciousness of these two impressions in a temporal process receding separately, we have consciousness of the succession: the S-H event. We can freely re-present the event memorially, but not simply as a memory of S then a memory of H, which would be a relationship of S' then H' both isolated in representation. Rather, to have a memory of the consciousness of the succession S-H, the formulation would be S-H, (S-H)', possibly S-H, (S-H)', (S-H)'' and so on as the event of succession recedes further (as a "run-off" modification to use time consciousness jargon) and as we continue to re-present through memory.

Above all the succession is a succession of experiences: the first is the original constitution of the succession [of S-H]; the second is the memory of this succession [(S-H)']; then the same again [(S-H)''], and so on. The total succession is originally given as presence (Husserl in Welton 1999b, 197).

⁷⁰ Husserl understands "the phenomenon of attention not simply an initiatory subjective act, but as correlated to the affective force exerted on the part of the matters themselves" (Steinbock 2004, 21).

- 8) The law of *co-existence* regulates the bringing together of two objects, images or egos in a temporal unity. At the level of passivity, a retentional memory of an object may appear as “enduring side by side” with that very object in its concrete apprehension. For example: if there are two images of a table separated by objective time—one occurring before the other in perception—the law of co-existence brings these two temporally separated images (the memory-image and the actual table before me) into the same space. As an activity within passive genesis, they are brought together in the same temporal field.

Here it does not matter that the remembered table in itself “belongs” to another objective time than the perceived table. We have a unity of “image,” and this is the image of a present, of a duration with a coexistence to which pertains a spatial unity. Thus, we can spatially “bring together” objects belonging to different fields of presence together by transposing them to *one temporal field* (Husserl 1973, 181).

- 9) The synthesis of association and their correlative laws (discussed in 7 and 8) occur at the level of passive genesis. These laws regulate intentionality: the sense-constitution of all objects in the world including self-temporalising subjective processes. These laws regulate more deeply the sense-forming unities: the relationship of *primal forms* “prior to the products of activity” in intentionality. Association “designates a realm of the innate apriori [*sic*], without which an ego as such is unthinkable” (Husserl in Welton 1999b, 315). Association occurs at the most fundamental level of intentional consciousness, but can only be caught sight of in the concrete (Husserl 1973, 75). It describes the many-leveled structures of a constituting ego in the activity of passive- active genesis. The decipherability of this realm is a forensically complex task.

The laws of association are finite in Husserl’s account, but the concretising connections themselves are infinite. These multiplicitous connections are where phenomenological description becomes possible. The subject is posited as “an infinite nexus of synthetically congruous performances” in genesis (Husserl in Welton 1999b, 315). Such an infinite nexus implies the possibility that inexhaustible connections emerging from the passive realm of sense-forming unities may be described and made understandable for the subject. Husserl is adamant that such understanding can only be achieved through a phenomenology of genesis.

Eidetic analyses of concrete phenomena in their temporal formation performed at the level of passivity reveals the essential structure of these most basic sense-forming connections.

Generative Method

To mollify concerns that Husserl's entire project leads to an irreducible and 'foundational' pure ego, I turn again to Steinbock's contemporary scholarship, which has viewed Husserl's transcendentalism as non-foundational. When a philosophy propounds certainty, validity or the constitution of sense in the world through the essential structures of an individuated experiencing consciousness, it is naturally open to attacks of Cartesianism, sometimes Kantianism—and irredeemably—solipsism.⁷¹ Once Husserl begins to describe the complexities of perceiving the natural world, and the ensuing radical method of exclusion forming the phenomenological and eidetic reductions, it is difficult to see how the world and other beings have been preserved as independently given and stable enough for the perception of anything to take place. This is more evident if the *Ideas I* is read in isolation with little attention to his thought as it developed in later texts. Husserl's phenomenology taken as generative (*Generativ*) defends these easily and often made misinterpretations.⁷² Acknowledging a generative move in Husserl's phenomenology is a further guide for building toward a phenomenologically informed aesthetics.

Husserl's transcendentalism has been a commonly held concern due to the implications of a radical subjectivism whereby the world and its contents are reduced to the

⁷¹ The charge of solipsism (in the extreme Berkeleyian sense that table, chairs and rooms no longer exist when we turn our backs) is a difficult one to make in relation to Husserl's theory of perception. If anything, the independent world of physical objects is what remains stable; they, unlike perceptions, do not change. Objects continue to exist without being perceived. Husserl is very clear in §41 of *Ideas I* about this point. What is in continual flux is the way in which the object appears and this includes what traditional empiricists distinguish as primary and secondary qualities. For Husserl, the primary qualities attributed to an object by the physical sciences are still "contents of the perceived physical thing" (Husserl 1983, 84). Husserl's key term *adumbration* helps to describe the many ways in which an object may be given: the colour of a physical thing in any given moment of its perception will be continually changing. "The same colour appears "in" continuous multiplicities of colour adumbrations" (Husserl 1983, 87). Similarly the spatial shape of an object, given to a person as one in the same shape, appears continuously, but always "in a different manner", in different adumbrations of shape.

⁷² To take one example, there is a degree of skepticism towards the use of Husserl in dance phenomenology, which is why Merleau-Ponty, with his citing of the body in the *Phenomenology of Perception* is the preferred philosopher. Many scholars take up these criticisms of Husserl as a Cartesian Solipsist without reading the corpus of his works. They fail to move past *Ideas I*, which is a seminal text in relation to Husserl's concept of intentionality, and is the most developed introduction to his phenomenological method. However, the role of the body and kinesthesia is most emphasised in his *Ideas II*. Noteworthy exceptions include Maxine Sheets-Johnstone and Anna Pakes, two dance phenomenologists who rigorously engage with Husserl's corpus of writings in relationship to dance, movement and the body. See Sheets-Johnstone (1984, 1999, 2009) and Pakes (2011).

sense-constitution of an irreducible foundational ego.⁷³ This is not a problem until his phenomenology is asked to consider the *social world*, otherness, its relation to history, political life, ethics, gender, ecology, and shared aesthetic experiences (Steinbock 1995, 2).⁷⁴

In *Home and Beyond: Generative Phenomenology after Husserl* (1995), Steinbock traces Husserl's methodological considerations from the *static* to the *genetic* toward *generativity* (*Generativität*). Husserl (not unlike Descartes) was methodically involved in a project that "recalcitrantly reduce[d] [the] structures of meaning and sense to a purely subjective foundation, to the so-called 'transcendental ego'" (Steinbock 1995, 2). There are issues for Husserl's thesis of intersubjectivity if it continues to be read only in relation to the genetic and static phases of his philosophy (Steinbock 1995, 7). As Steinbock illustrates, there are problems inherent with egological and foundational perspectives if attempting to solve problems in social life. Questions of "identity and difference", amongst other features of social life, become problematic if we attempt to reduce meaning to a foundational, transcendental ego (Steinbock 1995, 3). When the emphasis is on consciousness alone, the question of where the constituting and constituted subject is situated in relation to world history and its social life becomes problematic. Addressing this commonly held problem in Husserl's philosophy, Steinbock argues that transcendental phenomenology can be taken as regressively *non-foundational*. Rather than progressing in a Cartesian way from the simple relation between the subject and object of their perception in sense-constitution to the temporalising features of the constituted and constituting tied to the other in intersubjective relations, the study begins from the natural world working back from the lifeworld (*Lebenswelt*) to the ego. It is a *regressive* procedure in phenomenological method (Steinbock 1995, 171).⁷⁵

⁷³ Constitution or sense-constitution is an account of how something takes on sense: the world as constituted is an account of how the world is given in the way that it is given. It is not a positing of its existence. I continue to use the terms *sense-constitution* and *sense-constituting* throughout the rest of this section. These terms assist in making clear the distinction between static, genetic and generative method.

⁷⁴ Steinbock does not include 'aesthetic experience' in this list of social world experiences that a transcendental, foundational phenomenology is incapable of addressing. Rather, he leaves the list of social world experiences open with the words "and so forth" (Steinbock 1995, 2). For a discussion about the increase in scholarship within phenomenological aesthetics and emphasis upon aesthetic experience see Sepp & Lester (2010).

⁷⁵ Husserl uses the term lifeworld as early as *Ideas II*.

The term lifeworld is used here to characterize the personal communicative world, the natural world, the intuitive world, and the aesthetic world of experience, all of which are placed in contrast to the naturalistic or objective worldview peculiar to the natural sciences (Steinbock 1995, 87).

By the time of *The Crisis of European Sciences*, Husserl presents us with a world full of experienceable objects, perceivers, communities, theoretical objectivities, sciences, cultures and histories. He presents a version of the world that the phenomenological reduction had earlier bracketed in order to claim the transcendently purified

Generative phenomena (along with the processes of static and genetic methods) may be taken as particular *leitmotifs* in the overall “sense-constitution” of world, and so opening Husserl’s phenomenological analysis toward social, political and ethical issues. The identification of a generative method in Husserl’s philosophy has developed a strong interest in his work from political, social and moral thinkers. I believe this interest will extend to scholars of performance, especially those concerned with the level of abstraction that his phenomenology presents, and the upfront bracketing of the world’s transcendencies that the reductions follow.

Generativity and Intersubjectivity in Performance

The generative phase identified in Husserl’s philosophy ties the subject to others in a framework of intersubjectivity. In a performance context, it is rare to find a performer alone without an audience co-constituting the event. In some cases of performance art or ongoing installations, performance may occur without an audience present. Durational performances often find the performer alone for hours in the absence of audience. However in almost all cases, an audience is intended by the performer in some measure whether during or following the live event. If a performer is alone during a performance, they will continue to perform in the anticipation of more audience. Where a performer makes a video recording, the audience is posited after the event; during the recording process, the camera is posited as an external viewer.

Intersubjectivity is an essential structure of performance. Performance presupposes audience in its constitution. A potential problematic for the intersubjectivity thesis is the case of a performer who claims performing for performing’s sake: a for-itself, rather than a for-others. A for-itself performance entails no intended external audience, thus no performer-audience relation. In this atypical scenario, what can be said of intersubjectivity as a basic structure of performance? Considering a hypothetical example, a gender-bending artist may perform in solitude to develop an intimate relationship with a particular character or gender alterity. It is a performance of subjectivity as fluid identity. In this preparatory performance the self is taken as another to form a relational pole of self–self. Following Ricoeur, the self is

ego. It is a picture, now, turned upside down, and which methodologically takes intuitable and experienceable life—the lifeworld—as a pregiven foundation to regressively inquire back from, remaining as an inquiry into the things themselves. See Husserl (1970).

seen as another in this performance, so in a relation of audience to performing self (Ricoeur 1992). The performance now functions as a ‘for-others’ rather than a ‘for-itself’, and so reformulates the intersubjectivity thesis in a unique way. I do acknowledge, however, that working through more examples of possible ‘for-itself’ performances could challenge this suggestion. Having questioned the intersubjectivity thesis with the possibility of a ‘for-itself’ moment during performance through one example, I now ask: what kinds of experiences constitute an intersubjective relation for the performer prior to the execution of performance?

To tackle this scenario, I consider arguments for solo-collaboration in dance practice. Solo-collaboration posits that solo practice is always a case of collaboration with some other or others.⁷⁶ A solo artist may insist that they work alone, evidenced by the simple fact that no other psychophysical being is directly external to them in their creations. They may argue that in solo production, choreographic investigations are based in one’s own moving body where feedback is self-circulatory: re-attending embedded information accumulated in the lived moving body over time. And yet, while engaged in a process of historicising their acts, they move referentially to their history, intending some historical other or tradition. For example, any of the early modernists of dance who worked alone in a studio had the tradition of ballet to challenge or reinvent. This may have been in the form of a particular teacher’s methodology or incumbent style that, in the spirit of invention and reactionary progression, they were collaborating with an absent rival to instigate change.

Solo-collaboration expands traditional notions of collaboration and solo practice. Solo making, seen as a collaborative act and not a hermetic practice, transcends collaborative art-making associated with models of group devising. The temporal nature of collaboration can be seen in one’s investment to engage with our embodied histories from our very first *pliè* to drawing on specific aspects of dance history. Dancing with historic figures (the great choreographers of the past) and their ideas as posthumous moderators is a mode of collaboration. Reflection and generation of new material through antithetical or interpretive devices imposed on these ideas rejuvenated from history creates complex relationships not to be underestimated in creative formulations. A collaborator does not need to be an individuated bodily presence corporeally before you in the here-and-now. Rather, these spectral figures of history provide reference points and influence choices just as any second- or third-person perspective may offer in a studio-based collaboration.

⁷⁶ I work with Heddon and Milling’s definition of collaborative creation, which “insists upon more than one participant” in a creative process (Heddon & Milling 2006, 2). Unlike these authors, however, I am interested in expanding the ontology of what and who those participants could be.

Solo collaboration supports the claim that intersubjectivity is an essential structure of performance, before, during and after, and is evident despite claims to absolute solo making or performances performed in the absence of audience. Intersubjectivity as a basic structure of performance implies a historical, generational and traditional condition in the constituting processes of the performance—in its being as performance. Identifying and/or responding to some figure or tradition of practice within performance or dance history implies a community or nexus of others beyond and in relation to the individuated subject. Performance as an always-in-relation-with-other, where other is historically located or forms a tradition, requires a generative analysis. If my investigation was isolated to describing the community, history or tradition of a particular performance practice—say digital dance practices—a generative analysis would be more fitting to this task. However, to methodologically begin analysis in this particular lifeworld of digital performance practice would mean working back from this more developed enunciation of a cultural world.

My analysis will start from the complex moment of relation between phenomena: the shared experiential encounter of a fleshly body meeting a band of light. From here I will inquire into constituted phenomena, which are always already in inextricable relations to the constituting processes of the perceiver and shared intersubjectively amongst audience members. I will focus upon the genetic aspects of the experience, presupposed by the generative matter of a co-relation between performer and audience, as always-already-historical. My statement of methodological procedure starts with the genetic while accepting the pre-giveness of a cultural lifeworld.

Admission of a pre-given lifeworld, the world of digital performance practices, does not support Auslander's strategies for a de-ontology which is based on the premise that live and mediated forms are not, and can never be, ontologically distinct because they participate in the same cultural economy. In Auslanderian terms, these phenomena are not distinct because they are meaningful together in this reified lifeworld that he proposes as the cultural economy. A Husserlian lifeworld does not presuppose such conflation or subsumption of phenomena, especially not without attendance to the experiences in and by themselves, and not without working regressively back through static and genetic analyses.

To avoid any contradictions in my statement of procedure, my approach to transcendental phenomenology is best described as a vacillation between genesis and generativity. While I place a microscope on the moment of shared perception, I continue to

maintain a sense of history, community and generation in the disclosure of the structure of relating phenomena.

A Transcendental Aesthetic

A study of passive genesis is a concern for a transcendental aesthetic. It is important to note that Husserl, like Kant, pursued a transcendental aesthetic in order to understand (amongst other things) the lowest structural levels of human receptivity occurring in the sensuous—*aisthēsis*. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant was concerned with the spatio-temporal properties and relations of things at the root of human knowledge. His goal was to put forth an alternative theory “radically distinct from the nativist, empiricist, and sensationist accounts of space-and time cognition [...] of the theory of visual perception”, and to analyse the relations and forms of intuitionism informing the cognitive faculties (Falkenstein 1995, xv). However, Husserl’s transcendental aesthetic differs from Kant’s. It resists reduction to any posited relation or law-like structure by an overarching architectonic system prescribing a schema of categories.

In Husserl, a transcendental aesthetic helps ameliorate human existence in its description of the movement of thinking itself. From cognition (active genesis) back towards receptive experience (passive genesis), Husserl describes this movement with an arboreal tracing of synthetic activity (genesis) to the origins of logic: “even at its most abstract, logic demands an underlying theory of experience, which at the lowest level is described as prepredicative or prelinguistic” (Churchill 1972, xxi). To orient one’s enterprise in a transcendental aesthetic is to philosophically reflect upon the dynamic and processual nature of the sensuous in the lived-moving-body.

It will be my task to pursue through genetic analyses the sense-forming associations occurring in the *receptivity* of phenomena and ‘value-reception’ of the constituting ego. To reiterate, the receptivity of the ego is the lowest level of activity in the synthesis of active and passive genesis within perception. The receptive ego in relation to objects that affect our attention is the region for analyses. I intend to concentrate upon various associations—the connections and disjunctions—arising from the different fields of sense: the visual, aural and kinetic. The orientation of space and time perceived in an embodied way by the audience member experiencing the object-event externally or from within the performance (immersed in an installation) will be examined through *dimensionality*: the tempo-spatial relations between two dimensions and three. Individual kinesthesia and the inter-kinesthetic are to be

examined through the various texts produced by participants and other sourced literature, as their writings describe the complexities of embodied imaginings in a poetics of reception.

Tracing Kinesthesia in Reception

My case studies in the research project that formed the basis of my study—a case study I have called the *Poetics of Reception Project*—posit audience in two ways: (1) as distant co-constituting viewers constrained physically by the auditorium chair; and (2) as roaming audience participants in an installation environment interacting directly with performer and technology, and integrated into the event itself. Understanding kinesthesia for the constituted and constituting in (1) is an intersubjective relation of bodily empathy. Empathy, in kinesthetic terms, is a parasymphathetic and imaginative experience; while in (2), the kinesthesia of a more spatially entwined audience member relating or interacting with the performer and their technology is not only empathetic (as in 1) but is isolatable to the individuated audience member participating more actively (and passively) in the object-event.

Scenarios (1) and (2) provide distinct experiences of individuated kinesthesia and the inter-kinesthetic in this relationship between performer, technology and audience. Describing from an audience perspective what is external to the perception and reflecting upon their constituting acts in genesis reveals a very different structure of kinesthesia than what we find in accounts of performers experientially analysing their relationship with technology in practice and/or performance. Dance phenomenology takes up Sheets-Johnstone's call for understanding kinesthesia from self-movement. From the point of view of the dancer, we gain first-person, introspective insight into their co-extensive relationship with space, time, other dancers, objects, technologies, and music; and we are granted embodied reflections about how and why they move or don't move. Dance phenomenology invariably presupposes movement as the locus of knowledge and the foundation of life. Studies oriented in the experience of the dancer privilege self-movement, and invariably describe embodied sensation, feeling, or intended action.⁷⁷ Audience kinesthesia understood primarily from a phenomenological perspective is less readily found within dance literature.⁷⁸ Philosopher and

⁷⁷ For dancer-centric studies of self-movement see Minchinton (1994, 45-51), Nelson (1996, 4-15) and Potter (2008, 444-465).

⁷⁸ Studies within dance performance and choreography that foreground audience perspectives are proliferating in the areas of cognitive science. The main problem facing this mode of inquiry in the arts is the reduction of experiences to a type of measurable evidence that fails to provide meaning related to lived-experience. That we can map brain activity, describe a physiognomy or explain sensory processing in the body as a response of

dancer Phillipa Rothfield does, however, offer a critical analysis of universalist approaches to corporeal phenomenology that reduce non-balletic, non-modernist forms of dance to the same set of kinesthetic sensibilities in the watching and subsequent valuation of dance. She suggests a Foucauldian-inspired practice of phenomenology, whereby the genealogical history of corporeal constitution in the observer is taken into account in order to “retain a certain sort of universalism whilst recognizing a differential field of manifestation” (Rothfield 2005, 43).

The structure of kinesthesia for a chair-bound audience member takes on primary importance in my study. It is only through the constituting (or co-constituting) that the constituted may be described in terms of its essential structure. Despite the vagaries that the processes of passive genesis presents, to privilege the visual and cognitive over the felt or kinesthetic is to rob the inquiry of arriving at a fully fleshed account of the relationship between bodies and technologies.

The kinesthetic correlates of perception—what Husserl calls “the kinestheses”—are hence not practical perceptual affordances . . . They are, in their own right, perceptual experiences, the most fundamental of perceptual experiences, and as such are at the very core of the constituting I, that is, of transcendental subjectivity (Sheets-Johnstone 1999, 139).

What is significant for my study of aesthetic processes is the perspective that mediatised forms are already part of a particular lifeworld and historical process. Features of experience engaged in a continual process of becoming, changing and developing differently across cases, require iterations of a framework to compliment their dynamic nature. By concentrating on genesis through eidetic analyses of the object-event, the essential structure of these co-constituted encounters, the self-temporalising features of these constituting consciousnesses, and the intersubjective and inter-kinesthetic relations within audience, will be more readily disclosed. The purpose of my next chapter will be to develop the role of embodiment in the practice of this disclosure.

sadness and/or laughter to certain events is interesting. However, such analyses extricate the phenomena from contexts of experience in representations that fail to adequately develop the depth, structure and associations of aesthetic encounters. Cognitive science that methodologically lacks concern for individuated and intersubjective experience rapidly approaches it limits in aesthetic practices. For more on burgeoning studies in cognitive science, neuro-aesthetics and its criticisms within Dance Studies see Shusterman (1999, 299-313); Hagendoorn (2003, 221-27; 2004, 79-110); Brown, Martinez & Parsons (2006, 1157-67); Merino, Jola, Glaser & Haggard (2008, 911-22); Sheets-Johnstone (2009); Hagendoorn (2011, 513-529).

If then we want to bring to light the birth of being for us,
we must finally look at that area of our experience which clearly has significance and
reality only for us, and that is our affective life

Maurice Merleau-Ponty 1962 *Phenomenology of Perception* (178)

Embodiment is both elusive and self-evident. Taken *prima facie*, the question of embodiment is not, here, an existential or ontological problem: there is no denying that we have bodies, or in fact, that we *are* our bodies. The following discussion does not attempt to argue towards the existence of bodies *per se*. Rather, the matter of embodiment becomes a set of epistemological questions within a phenomenology: Can we know our bodies? How do we know our bodies? To what extent can we describe our bodies? Provoking inquiry from what we know and can know from experiential limits, I will proceed somewhat heuristically from certain concepts and debates found within the traditions of phenomenology, embodied cognition, and dance studies.

Throughout this chapter, I draw upon the theoretical aspects outlined in Chapters 2 and 3 to build towards a methodology for understanding the structural relationship between bodies and technologies—live and/or mediatised—and the experience of the spectator as analyst within performance.⁷⁹ An account of the spatio-temporal structure of receptivity for the spectator will be central to my investigation. I intend to grasp this structure through an analysis of descriptive writings derived from my own application of the phenomenological framework to be described in Chapter 5. These writings will facilitate the communication of experiences between selected participants involved in the same object-event and/or across events. I will understand these phenomenologically-produced texts in light of other writings pursuing similar methods investigating performer experience in mediatised performances, including Susan Kozel's phenomenology of performing in Paul Sermon's *Telematic Dreaming* (Kozel 2007).

Before establishing the practical nuts and bolts of my methodology, I present here a supportive 'conceptual relation' that builds succinctly and purposefully upon the individuated kinesthetic and inter-kinesthetic dimensions of a spectator participating as a player in *play*,

⁷⁹ In the previous two chapters, I used the term spectator-analyst to indicate the special kind of audience member who undertakes phenomenology in the act of audiencing. From this point onwards, I will discontinue the use of this bulkier term and simply refer to them as a spectator. I will use the term audience member or audience to indicate those who are not doing phenomenology.

collaborating in the formation of these aesthetic events. These will be elaborated with theoretical relevance to Husserl's approach discussed in the previous chapter on phenomenology. I will use the conceptual relation *embodiment—embodied imaginings—writing embodiment* to organise various concepts identified in the literature on embodiment. This relation will also afford a departure point or opening for understanding bodily experience at a structural level in relation to selected phenomena. This is a non-procedural, non-linear relation that orients both the spectator doing phenomenology, and my textual analysis of the writings and documentation. *Embodiment—embodied imaginings* are non-discrete constituents of experience that bear a strong relationship in terms of their generative, interwoven structure, but should not be taken as a presupposed deeper *a priori* structure of bodies in relation to technological media. The point of a phenomenological investigation is to disclose what these essential structures are through an eidetic analysis of diverse experiences, actual and imagined. Ultimately this relation turns the spectator's attention toward phenomena (*active turn of regard*) and towards their description of experiences, including the perception of an external object, their constituting consciousness, embodiment, kinesthesia, and movement. In this sense, the relation should be treated as a methodological aid, not as a positing of fixed assumptions about embodied consciousness in mediated performance experiences. In the process of thinking, research and writing, this relation has functioned heuristically as a revelatory device or practice. The writing of a phenomenological approach is itself a phenomenology. Sustaining this relation throughout the phenomenological process will inevitably clarify, elaborate, and extend the ideas, questions, limits and debates forthcoming. I will return to aspects of embodiment, movement, imagining, temporality and the writing of these experiences again in the closing chapters.

There are many different conceptions of embodiment describing bodies, the senses and affect in experience. While recognising the diversity of cultural perspectives of anthropologies focused on embodiment in performance contexts, and the limitations of a Western philosophical treatment of the body, I will construct my relation in accordance with the phenomenological canon that seeks the structures of experience.⁸⁰

Within the phenomenological tradition, Maurice Merleau-Ponty is credited with the most celebrated study of embodiment. In the *Phenomenology of Perception* (1962) he addresses the relationship between subjectivity and objectivity in an experiential account of the body.⁸¹ Prior to the phenomenological movement, ‘the body’, *qua* object, was effectively relegated to secondary consideration in philosophical thought as a major consequence of Descartes’ systematic doubt; a systematic doubt that might be described as a deconstructive epistemological method, rendering the physical body and its senses open to existential deception and uncertainty.⁸² Later, the subject/object problematic was taken up by Husserl through his thesis of intentionality and the constituting, constituted territory of consciousness.

A thesis on embodiment is rarely attributed to Husserl. Scholars, such as Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, have reread key Husserlian texts, revealing a sensing, sensating and lived body to argue that his work on consciousness does not preclude the body: rather, for Husserl, the body is central to *all* perception and the constitution of things in the world. In *Ideas II*, Husserl writes:

⁸⁰ Besides Merleau-Ponty’s and—even earlier—Husserl’s account of the lived body (*Leib*) in his *Ideas II*, contemporary feminist scholars working within phenomenology have questioned the neutralizing of bodies through transcendental phenomenology, which is argued to be a philosophical exercise reducing all bodily acts to a form of intentionality. On this account, the notion of embodiment conceptualised by transcendental, and existential male phenomenologists overlook gender and race.

It does not, then, seem to be *bodies* that one finds in Husserl, but a *living body* (*Leib*) that is defined eidetically, within invariable parameters. At worst, the body Husserl describes is accidental and external to consciousness, at best it is the body of a transcendental and universal subject (Al-Saji 2010, 16).

Al-Saji considers both the limitations of Husserlian phenomenology and what it can offer feminist theory through an exploration of sensings and touch (Al-Saji 2010,13-38). For an intercultural perspective of embodiment in performance see Sklar (2007, 38-46).

⁸¹ First published in French in 1954 by Gallimard, Paris. I am working from the Colin Smith translation published by Routledge Classics, 2002.

⁸² See Descartes ([1641]1996). I use the term deconstructive in a non-Derridian sense, whereby the existence of all things are subject to radical doubt.

The Body is, in the first place, the medium of all perception; it is the organ of perception and is necessarily involved in all perception . . . When it touches objects, the hand slides over them. Moving myself, I bring my ear closer in order to hear. Perceptual apprehension presupposes sensation-contents, which play their necessary role for the constitution of the appearances of the real things themselves (Husserl 1989, 61).

Following the body's exclusion from the activities of the *epoché* in *Ideas I*, as a transcendency of the natural world, Husserl reinstates the body in his arguments for bodily constitution and self-awareness in the reconstitution of material nature in *Ideas II*, making a fundamental distinction between the lived-body (*leib*) and the physical body (*korper*). Bodily self-awareness is made possible through the lived experiences (*Erlebnis*) of our *sensings* within the occurrence of touch. Sensings are prior to any objectification of the body constituted as mine but may be reflected upon through directed phenomenological reflection towards these instances of touch: a body in perpetual contact with its world.

The body and bodily experience, however, are dealt with more thoroughly by Merleau-Ponty, particularly in his description of the problems of body-image and bodily constitution in his approach to perception. In the *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty demonstrates the physiological and psychical as non-amalgamated, non-independent entities. Thinking *is* the body, enacted through individuals' projects within the world of things and with other persons. Rather than view Merleau-Ponty's treatise on embodiment as a conceptual mediation between mind and body/subject and object, it is more accurate to understand his explications of the bodily as an integrative move that centralises corporeality as the phenomenon with which our existence is expressed constantly.

In this way the body expresses total existence, not because it is an external accompaniment to that existence, but because existence realizes itself in the body (Merleau-Ponty 2002, 192).

Merleau-Ponty did not foreground the body simply to counter mind-centered philosophies; he was foremost an existential philosopher concerned with the meaning of Being, analysed through instances of bodily experience. Existence is a "perpetual incarnation" of "abstract moments", deemed to be, the body, mind, sign and significance (Merleau-Ponty 2002, 192). As I suggested in Chapter 3, for Merleau-Ponty the body is neither in space, nor in time, nor is it in the world as an operating system determined by psychophysical connections enacting toward external objects, and described in abstract or objective terms. Rather, "the union of

soul and body [. . .] is enacted at every instance in the movement of existence”.⁸³ The body—like other objects—inhabits the spatio-temporal given world. Merleau-Ponty elegantly describes what it is to ‘have’ a body.

To have a body is to possess a universal setting, a schema of all types of perceptual unfolding and of all those inter-sensory correspondences which lie beyond the segment of the world which we are actually perceiving. A thing is, therefore, not actually *given* in perception, it is internally taken up by us, reconstituted and experienced by us in so far as it is bound up with a world, the basic structures of which we carry with us, and of which it is merely one of many possible concrete forms (Merleau-Ponty in Welton, 1999a, 174).

On this account, a working concept of embodiment should never privilege the body or physical over the mind or what is traditionally constituted and separated as consciousness: the ‘I think’. On the contrary, it should show their relationship in a dynamic interplay of peculiar emphasis between thought, action, sensing, remembering, imagining and emoting in the body’s interrelated boundedness with the world as *horizon*.⁸⁴ These changing permutations of enactment correlate to the way that we as psychophysical beings are of the world in our horizontal push toward others and objects.

In the next section, I will focus upon conceptions of embodiment and bodily constitution in Merleau-Ponty, Shaun Gallagher, Donn Welton and Brian Massumi. Particular themes will emerge from this careful, though brief, survey, helping to form a guiding conceptual framework for developing and applying my phenomenological method.

⁸³ Part quote by E. Menninger-Lerchenthal from *Das Truggebilde der eigenen Gestalt* found in “Maurice Merleau-Ponty: selected readings” in (Welton 1999a, 154).

⁸⁴ What I describe here as an interplay of peculiar emphasis on psycho-physical modes of enactment takes the Gestaltian shape of a foreground emerging from or disappearing into a background. The Gestalt movement is found as a deeper perceptual structure in both Merleau-Ponty’s analysis of perception and Heidegger’s *ready-to-hand* concept in our everyday ‘concernful dealings’. See §16 “How the Worldly Character of the Environment Announces itself in Entities Within-the-world” in (Heidegger 1962, 102-7).

Notwithstanding Merleau-Ponty's description of embodiment as a process of unfolding in and with the world, it is claimed by some theorists that the human body moving in relation to its environment is organised at a deeper non-consciously-apprehended level. As a phenomenologist working in the field of embodied cognition, Shaun Gallagher refers to this system of organisation as a *body schema* (Gallagher 2005, 18).⁸⁵ In doing so, he makes a key distinction between this term and the closely related term 'body-image' in his conception of embodiment. Literature from psychology, philosophy and medicine, Gallagher argues, confusedly posits these two terms as substitutable, and conflates them on the basis of sharing a few characteristics. Gallagher's conceptual separation remedies this confusing conceptual ambiguity, all the while acknowledging that body image and body schema are "different but closely related systems". On the one hand, *body image* "consists of a system of perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs" that you possess about your body (Gallagher 2005, 24).⁸⁶ For example, I can have a belief about my body's shape or size, picture this in a mental image, and consequently make the judgment that I will fit through a particular doorway. On the other hand, *body schema*:

[i]s a system of sensory-motor capacities that function without awareness or the necessity of perceptual monitoring . . . [it] involves certain motor capacities, abilities, and habits that both enable and constrain movement and the maintenance of posture (Gallagher 2005, 24).

In the absence of having a belief or mental representation of my body shape or size, I may pass through a doorway without consciously judging whether I will fit through or not. My body organises itself within an environment at a more or less pre-conscious level with marginal bodily awareness (say, if I scrape my arm on the frame). Usually, in these instances, I do not think about my movement or reflect on my body as I pass through an unfamiliar doorway. Even if this doorway leads into a traditional English cottage, I automatically bend

⁸⁵ Gallagher's approach for a theory of 'embodied cognition' engages with the fields of phenomenology and philosophy of mind, psychology, medicine, and cognitive science. He empirically and philosophically draws on all these areas to conceptually build towards his thesis that the 'body shapes the mind'. In order to describe how embodiment helps us understand cognition, Gallagher insists on a shared vocabulary and framework of concepts consensually reached across these fields. See Gallagher (2005).

⁸⁶ I find this distinction compelling and useful for future research on my *Tiny Worlds Project*. A project that considers kinesthetic perceptions of scale: the constitution of bigness and smallness in relation to aesthetic objects, nature and the built environment. See initial findings in Chapter 7, pp 258-261 and discussion in my conclusion, pp 280-281.

forward and slightly crouch to organise my body to fit through the small opening. If I believed myself too wide (even if this were not the case) body image has come into play *over and against* body schema. Gallagher insists that in our experience of embodiment they each work together; in healthy embodiment, body image and body schema interrelate at points of awareness to integrate the moving body with its perceptions. This relationship can be dysfunctional in certain neurological disorders, such that one's body image works against their body schema, or vice versa.

On Gallagher's account, to have a full awareness of the moving body is impossible due to the hidden, dynamic processes of *bodily-schemata*.⁸⁷ By and large, the function of a body schema is a limit to bodily self-awareness. However, some of our bodily-schemata can be brought into perceptual awareness:

[t]o the extent that one does become aware of one's own body, by monitoring or directing perceptual attention to limb position, movement, or posture, then such an awareness helps to constitute the perceptual aspect of a body image (Gallagher 2005, 26).

Gallagher seeks clarification of the body schema system through his use of a further concept: the *prenoetic performance of the body*. The prenoetic performance of the body involves those habitual postures and movements that are not conceptualised, visualised or emoted (as is the case with body-image). The prenoetic is where the body "acquires a certain organisation or style in its relation with its environment", but which is not readily brought to consciousness and includes the non-conscious aspects of proprioceptive activity (Gallagher 2005, 32).⁸⁸ Prenoetic movements help to structure consciousness and the perceptual field within which they are entwined.

Theorists of embodiment wish to understand the extent to which bodily-schemata are at play in structuring consciousness. Indeed, the prenoetic or hidden body schema imputes a limit to absolute bodily and self-awareness, a matter for much discussion by both philosophers and scientists. While the latter focus upon empirically-derived data, my position on how to address such limits to bodily attention in the receptive experiences of audience needs to be elaborated.

⁸⁷ Merleau-Ponty and Gallagher persist with the term 'body schema'. Welton and others (including myself) refer to the body's schema as bodily-schemata. The latter term denotes a multiplicity in two ways: first, in the sense of there being more than one body schema for bodies; and second, that there is a plurality of kinesthesias and proprioceptions that form the basis of muscle contraction and our posture as we move within intentional actions.

⁸⁸ Proprioception will be discussed more specifically in relation to other authors later in this section.

The system that is the body schema allows the body actively to integrate its own positions and responses and to deal with its environment without the requirement of a reflexive conscious monitoring directed at the body. It is a dynamic operative performance of the body, rather than a consciousness, image or conceptual model of it (Gallagher 2005, 32).

Gallagher's recasting of the concepts 'body image' and 'body schema' offers a compelling and coherent delineation of embodiment. Particularly striking in Gallagher's conceptual distinction is the idea that both body image and body schema are experientially involved in dynamic reciprocities of interaction. Nonconscious, unreflected awareness of the prenoetic is interrupted or overcome (depending on how you view this debate) in those moments where an explicit awareness of the body occurs because of pain (Leder 1990), fatigue (Gallagher 1995, 33-4), an activity going wrong (Heidegger 1962), or in the practice of a technique that expands bodily attention to focus at a subtle scale upon the more explicit regions of bodily activity.⁸⁹ Gallagher demonstrates this reciprocity in his assessment of dancers and athletes who can improve the performance of their body schema.

The dancer or athlete who practices long and hard to make deliberate movements proficient so that movement is finally accomplished by the body without conscious reflection uses a consciousness of bodily movement to train body-schematic performance (Gallagher 2005, 35).

My own area of inquiry might, then, be described as the prenoetic performance of a spectator. What are the clues for prenoetic activity in an audience member reacting to their encounter with a moving performer, technologies and their representations, and other audience members? Before considering how to frame attentional bodily awareness that understands a reciprocal interaction between body image, bodily- schemata, and movement, I will firstly explicate two alternative definitions and descriptions of proprioception (Massumi's and Welton's) and its relation to bodily awareness.

⁸⁹ Some dance, martial art and yoga practices attempt to access the hidden prenoetic organisation of the body through movement, training and experiential bodywork. For more on this see my discussion of Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen's Body-mind Centering (BMC) approach in Chapter 2, pages 68-69. Or see Bainbridge-Cohen (2008).

Proprioception: Several Cases

Here I am taking up both Gallagher and Welton's elaboration of bodily-schemata in relation to my phenomenological investigation in order to develop a point of departure and a set of questions for deepening spectatorial attentional awareness. Embodiment is something to grapple with in description, and problematic to conceptualise without limiting or reducing these experiences to a set of concepts, thereby undermining these deeper structures that are recognised within studies of embodied consciousness and cognition as elusive. However ineffable or inexplicit kinaesthesias are, I am bound in this dissertation to communicate adequately and openly with language a thorough description through reflective bodily-awareness.

The proprioceptive system organises bodily disposition and the way we bear our body parts, carriage and movement. Most basic to bodily-schemata are the *lived vectors* that orient the body in spatial relations to itself and other objects: "head-foot, side-side, and rear-aft [...] top-bottom, left-right, back-front, near-far", or more dynamically "upward-downward, leftward-rightward, closer-further" (Welton 2004, 14-15). They refer to the same hidden domain of the body's organisational structure.

In *Parables for the Virtual: movement, affect, sensation*, Brian Massumi argues that:

[t]here is a sixth sense directly attuned to the movement of the body: proprioception. It involves specialized sensors in the muscles and joints. Proprioception is a self-referential sense, in that what it most directly registers are displacements of the parts of the body relative to each other. Vision is an exoreferential sense, registering distances from the eye (Massumi 2002, 179).

In a telling anecdote, Massumi describes a moment of disjunction between visual perception and the experience of proprioception: his realisation that the actual street below his office window is different to—in fact bears no resemblance to—the street he thought he looked out upon everyday. Once this confusion is brought to his attention, Massumi is unable to draw, or map with two-dimensional lines, the exact pathway from the entrance/exit of the building to his office door, but is able to retrace his daily route by physically 'back-forming' the spatial route. Massumi understands this ongoing confusion of orientation to be the result of bodily memory having more of an impact than visual memory on his experience. He accounts for proprioception as a positive misperception, rather than as a deeper, non-conscious structure informing our embodiment, and attributes this orientation (or disorientation with the way the

geometries of the building were visually mapped) to proprioceptive information. He concludes that:

[t]he proprioceptive self-referential system—the referencing of movement to its own variations—[is] more dependable, more fundamental to our spatial experience than the exoreferential visual-cue system [. . .] Its role in human orientation has significant implications for our understanding of space because it inverts the relation of position to movement. Movement is no longer indexed to position. Rather, position emerges from movement, from a relation of movement to itself. Philosophically, this is no small shift (Massumi 2002, 180).

Donn Welton considers the structure of proprioception, identifying three distinct types of sensations involved in the act and action of touching another object. At the level of bodily self-awareness he argues that we can be either tacitly or explicitly aware of our intentional acts when touching objects. These acts are invariably and non-exhaustively “qualitatively differentiated” acts of “seeing, hearing, smelling, loving, hating, etc. objects” (Welton 2004, 7). Preferring to see this awareness as a *reflexive*, rather than a *reflective* act, Welton avoids the problematic issue of introducing a third act of reflection on a second reflective act, which takes the initial intentional act as its object for reflection. The prospect of a third act reflecting on the reflection begs—like the second act—to be accounted for, thus setting up an infinite regress in an absurd chain of reflections. Welton argues that if self-awareness is possible, then by viewing self-awareness in terms of reflexivity, our self-awareness of an intentional act attends to the intentional act itself in the moment of having that act: it is a *lived-through* experience (*Erlebnis*) and not a chain of second, third, or fourth acts of reflection, *ad infinitum* (Welton 2004, 5). At this point, he makes a distinction between the “*explicit* awareness of objects and the *implicit* or *tacit* awareness we have of our experiences of objects” (Welton 2004, 5).

Condensing Welton’s argument, let us take an example where touch is involved. In the unity of experience these acts could be nested amongst others in what Merleau-Ponty describes as a “nexus of intentionalities” (Merleau-Ponty 2002, 484). For instance, if I grab the handle of my coffee mug and begin to lift it toward my mouth; I feel its smooth, shiny texture, and its rigid contours that allow me to grip and lift its contents. What occurs here in reflexive awareness is an explicit tactile sensation created by the action of picking up the mug. In terms of touch and touching, I am aware of the mug solely through tactile sensation. Following the initial intention of wanting to drink coffee, I intend a second act through touch of the particular object I know from experience to be my coffee mug (for argument’s sake,

say I am staring at the computer screen—another, though different act occurring simultaneously in the nest of intentionalities within the unity of experience—and reach for the mug without looking). The variety of tactile sensations I experience from picking up the mug (its smoothness, warmth, roundness) helps determine *profiles* of it, as the object ‘mug’: the presenting intentional act of that object in the experience of drinking coffee. Tactile sensations are the first kind of sensations involved in the structural awareness of touching. They give objects a thematic awareness. We do not need to attend to this part of the act with any type of reflection: “[e]xplicit awareness is really attention and it is truly lost in the matter at hand” (Welton 2004, 5).

This kind of attention, however, does not “exhaust the scope of [our] awareness” (Welton 2004, 5). Implicit or tacit awareness about our experiences are precisely where two other sensations come into play. Returning to our example of the coffee mug, if I happen to close my eyes while holding the mug there is a tacit awareness of me touching it, and the mug touching me, not just the explicit awareness of the mug as an object. Feelings are centralised in the fingers, the point of contact between the mug and me. Noticing this contact, I feel the weight and contraction in my joints, the warmth and smoothness on the skin. I have localised feelings from the surface area of the mug making contact with a region of skin. Internally, I feel sensations radiating from my fingers, through my hands and wrists, up to the shoulder joint. My “fingers undergo sensing or sensuous feelings” in a localised way. Without these fingers holding the mug the act of touching “would cease and, as a consequence” the mug as a touched object would disappear (Welton 2004, 11). The distinction between tactile and sensorial feelings is important to maintain in understanding affective awareness. Affectivity places all intentional acts and their objects in the world, but not in the sense that, say, “a cat is in a box”; rather, perceptual objects are subtended by other experiences that “pervade [...] them all” (Welton 2004, 9). In all perceptual experiences there is:

a certain openness to what surrounds those objects, to a background, even atmosphere, from which they emerge. Like air on a thick, humid day, this atmosphere soaks the whole of experience with an inescapable weight that permeates all that we see or feel. Let’s speak of this as *affectivity* (Welton 2004, 9-10)

Sensorial feelings make possible a self-awareness that attends to the touching and not just to the object. The body is included as both the basis and as a participant in what Husserl calls a

circular intentionality: the touching-touched-touching. Sensorial feelings are the root of reflexivity for Welton; they “place the act in the body touching” (Welton 2004, 12), and so form the second set of sensations for bodily awareness in cases of touch.

A third set of sensations is the *kinaesthesias*, or *proprioceptive system*, which form Gallagher’s system of body-schemata informing the position of the body in relation to itself, other objects and the surrounding world. This is the basis for how the muscles contract (the organisation of my fingers as they close around the mug in relation to my shoulder joint), and our posture as it moves within all intentional acts, constituting our body capabilities, framing our more explicit tactile sensations by integrating “the actions of the body with the acts of touching” and so provide us with the possibility for movement (Welton 2004, 14).

Welton and Gallagher argue that kinesthesias are not accessible to conscious awareness. As capacities they are within the realm of the possible; they are futural, and not explicitly available to our lived experience. Rather, we live through them. Despite the unreflected nature of bodily-schemata, Welton maintains that in cases of touch the organisation of our tactile sensations and sensorial feelings are undoubtedly presupposed by our bodily-schemata that coordinates and “establish[es] the spatial maps of what is explicitly experienced”. They are responsible for that which is sensorially and perceptually explicit within our lived experience (Welton 2004, 15). Critically, identifying the body’s senses at this more defined, but hidden structural level, Welton raises the question as to whether bodily-schemata can in fact tell us anything about the structure of consciousness, asking what methods are available to us if phenomenology and philosophies depending upon reflection cannot reach these prenoetic or nonconscious structures.

Gallagher and Welton’s analyses raise a methodological dilemma with respect to phenomenological description and the possibility of complete bodily awareness. Welton attempts to overcome this problematic in a Merleau-Pontian manner by extending reflexivity and affectivity to all intentional acts, not just to cases of touch. Thus, a thesis of reflexive, unreflective affectivity accepts self-consciousness as body-consciousness.

What is in play here is not a reflexivity that ties self-awareness to intentionality but one that reaches deeper and connects reflexivity to our preconscious being-in-the-world. We are calling it affectivity. In affectivity we share the flesh of the world (Welton 2004, 17).

Welton further proposes that “[t]he difference between touch and the other senses might give us a key to the aesthetic dimensions of conscious life and the link between self-consciousness and body-consciousness” (Welton 2004, 16).

It is not the business of my project to identify or determine a list of preconscious structures, or to demonstrate that these other senses might be a bridge between self-consciousness and body consciousness. Even though these problems are philosophically pertinent to my project, any further participation in the debate would steer me further from the task at hand. From the perspectives presented here, however, bodily-schemata can be understood as the deepest organisational structure of the body that we know within our culture and time exists, and of which we cannot be completely aware.⁹⁰ For Gallagher, the prenoetic performances of the body can operate “without the requirement of a reflexive conscious monitoring directed at the body” (Gallagher 2005, 32). However, for the epistemologist of the body—the philosopher, scientist, artist, *et al.*—who wants to know with some level of certainty or to have an awareness of these deeper so-called hidden structures, are these explanations adequate? Are we to accept that we have met our reflective limits with bodily-schemata? (Welton 2004, 22)⁹¹

My contention is that by working within the tradition of practical phenomenology, my spectators will develop a degree of reflective and reflexive involvement with their bodily responses, opening upon the deeper workings of their bodily-schemata with embodied attention. Moreover, this approach will help participants avoid the trap of providing non-bodily, non-sensuous accounts of their experiences, and referencing with shallow, readily formed concepts of how bodies move on stage. Taking a simple example, the kick or swing of a leg may be elaborated beyond the common conception and description of this movement as an isolated action: a description of embodiment that temporally enfolds being with world. If we are not open to pushing towards describing the deeper structures of bodily constitution, bodily-schemata may remain dormant, and movement limited. In performance and dance studies, kinesthesia, sense, and affectivity are described in a diversity of ways.⁹² My project suggests one method that addresses the experience of embodiment from within audience.

⁹⁰ Again, I acknowledge that my research is delimited by the Western canon, and thus alternative conceptions of embodiment may seek deeper structures beyond bodily-schemata that are only identified through the lens of cognition and intentionality.

⁹¹ For more on bodily-schemata and the limits to self-bodily awareness, see McNeilly (2011).

⁹² See articles in Banes & Lepecki (2007).

Accepting bodily-schemata as unreflected, nonconscious activities structuring consciousness raises the following questions:

- 1) Do we only focus our attention on what we can reflect upon? What and how can bodily-schemata be brought to consciousness?
- 2) Is it still phenomenology if we do not engage in a reflection of our bodily awareness? What are the limits to a phenomenological approach when it comes to the hidden structures of consciousness?
- 3) If we accept that there is something deeper—perhaps ‘a preconscious being-in-the-world’—can we choose to ignore it and be satisfied with that which is *prima facie*?
- 4) If we begin by paying attention and describing our phenomenal consciousness—what can a detailed description reveal about prenoetic bodily-schemata in experience?
- 5) Is there a method of attention that penetrates the “dynamic function of the body in its environment” and promotes a language of description that goes beyond our usual conceptions that refer and reflect body image?
- 6) Could this language of description be a form of poesis that does not explain but elucidates and extends our reflexive and affective attention?

These questions deepen and nuance our understanding of the experience of embodiment and its description, framing (and framed by) the problems associated with theories on reflection and inaccessibility of bodily experience; I hold these questions in mind as I undertake my phenomenology.

Within studies of embodiment, kinesthetic empathy is a significantly complex phenomenon of movement, occurring at the level of intercorporeal and interkinetic relations between bodies. In performance, the role of kinesthetic empathy as an experiential phenomenon between performer and audience member has motivated rigorous scholarship utilising and combining various approaches including psychology, sociology and neurophysiology. The most recent publications and research within dance studies on this topic emerge from author Susan Leigh Foster (University of California, Berkeley 2010), mentioned in my Introduction, and members of the project *Watching Dance: Kinesthetic Empathy* (The University of Manchester, United Kingdom, 2008-2011).⁹³ In her book *Choreographing Empathy: kinesthesia in performance* (2010), Foster provides a thorough genealogy of concepts historically associated with “the experience of feeling what another is feeling” (Foster 2010, 129). Empathy (*Einfühlung*), sympathy and sensibility are examined in relation to kinesthesia following an equally thorough study of this latter experience (pp. 126-173). Foster summarises various moral and aesthetic theories from psychologists, philosophers, and medical scientists from the late eighteenth to the late twentieth century that explain the processes and connections between the body, mind, spirit, imagination, and emotions of an individual in relation to *feeling* how others feel. The body, its processes and relational transference are discussed at a mechanistic, atomistic and neural level. Empathy within aesthetic experiences is also discussed in relation to how an individual feels the inner structure and movements of objects, artworks and architecture. Foster emphasises a post-colonial, socio-cultural perspective that views the phenomenon of kinesthetic empathy as a critical means for exposing specific power relations between races and genders, including past events of slavery and torture by British colonialists (Foster 2010, 142-7). The works of dance historian John Martin and choreographer Ivar Hagendoorn are cited to demonstrate the relevance of dance and watching dance as a cogent and meaningful approach for exploring the phenomenon of kinesthetic empathy, especially aesthetic dance practices in relation to later theories emerging from a phenomenological understanding of empathy and the role of the body in the work of Edith Stein (1913) and Merleau-Ponty (1962).⁹⁴ The studies of

⁹³ Since the writing and examination of this dissertation there has been a published compilation of essays on this work. See Reason & Reynolds (2012).

⁹⁴ Foster points to the various terms used within dance history to explain the experiences of kinesthetic empathy when watching dance. John Martin refers to this experience initially as ‘metakinesis’ the Greek definition for

neuroscientist Vittorio Gallese in the late 1990s provide a neural explanation for the human propensity to feel what another is feeling. Mirror neuron-networking evidences at a biological level how we “share actions, intentions, feelings, and emotions with others” (Gallese in Foster 2010, 165). ‘Resonance’ and ‘embodied simulation’ are key indicators of neural networking.

This “resonance” does not necessarily produce a movement or an action. It is an internal motor representation of the observed event which, subsequently, may be used for different functions, among which is imitation (Gallese in Foster 2010, 165).

Foster draws out two important points from Gallese’s speculations: first is the capacity for physical empathy based on mirror neuron networking to form our sociality; and the second, that our mirror neurons are based on a unique and individual history of experiences (Foster 2010, 167). She does not, however, provide further evidence regarding the role of individual historical experiences in the functioning of mirror neurons during empathy. This raises the question: what meaningful information does an empirical study of mirror neurons contribute to our experiential understanding of kinesthetic empathy?

Members of the *Watching Dance: Kinesthetic Empathy* consortium conducted research from 1 April 2008 until the summer of 2011 on the role of kinesthetic responses in audiences. The objectives of the research were to understand different levels of audience experience and the potentials for cultural enrichment, to connect the disparate fields of “motor physiology, affective neuroscience and social neuroscience”, and to further clarify the relationship between mirror neuron activity and human emotional and visual perception. The workshops included qualitative methods including “semi-structured interviews” and creative techniques used in conjunction with neurophysiological methods.⁹⁵ There was a strong conviction amongst the consortium to empirically prove that spectators of dance are not just motionless, myopic onlookers preoccupied with the visual. The neurophysiological study of brain activity in relation to sensation and emotion in stimulated responses gives physical data

the “overtone of movement”; then later as ‘inner mimicry’: “[i]t is the dancer’s whole function to lead us into imitating his actions with our faculty for inner mimicry in order that we may experience his feelings” (Martin in Foster 2010, 156-7). Yvonne Rainer describes her experience of a solo performance of Ramayana’s character Nala, where for the first time in years she responds kinetically to the dancers hand gestures (*mudra*) which “[f]elt very powerful and quick as though I could actually do it”, but was unable to read them like the facial gestures (*bahva*). Rainer terms this experience ‘kinetic empathy’ (Rainer in Foster, 162).

⁹⁵ See details of the group’s method on the *Watching Dance: Kinesthetic Empathy* website: (<http://www.watchingdance.org/research/index.php>); (<http://www.watchingdance.org/research/fmri/index.php>); (<http://www.watchingdance.org/research/tms/index.php>).

to support the feelings we have when we watch others move. Due to the cumbersome equipment used for brain imaging and testing, it is important for researchers to triangulate their methods with these aforementioned qualitative approaches. My *Poetics of Reception* framework offers a qualitative approach (with an outcome of qualitative data) for understanding kinesthetic empathy at a structural level of reception.⁹⁶

The results of my analyses, discussed in Chapter 7, clearly promote phenomenology as an approach for understanding and elaborating (within the phenomenological tradition of embodiment) the essential structure of kinesthetic empathy as a key experiential aspect of watching digital performance. Rather than tracing this phenomenon as a historical concept, the work permits me to identify the varying modes of relation between performer, audience and technological media at the level of a shared corporeality and kinesis from within the language of experience itself.

⁹⁶ For an excellent study utilising a semiotic phenomenology on spectators' cinematic experience, see Sobschack (1992).

§2.4.4 MOVEMENT & KINESIS

Merleau-Ponty recognised that “[i]t is clearly in action that the spatiality of our body is brought into being, and an analysis of one’s own movement should enable us to arrive at a better understanding of it” (Merleau-Ponty 2002, 117).

To the question “[h]ow does the body understand itself?”, he responds:

[t]he body belongs to the world, so like understanding ones external world through an experience of movement, it is the body’s involvement with worldly objects, being body *qua* body, that access is possible (Merleau-Ponty 2002, 484).

Movement is primary to any description of embodiment and must not be overlooked in audience receptivity. As difficult as it is to describe the movement we experience while sitting and watching a performer, many of our sensations can be understood as an elaboration of the kinetic. Take for example, my description of a dancer: “he raises his body like a platform on one arm, tilts to the side and rolls away”. I capture this complex external movement not only as a visual image, but as a kinetically-elaborated sensation; I feel the brace and the release of the roll. These descriptions in relation to audience-based kinetic sensations—central to the study of *kinesthetic empathy*—are significant in dynamically moving bodily-schemata from becoming a static condition, referred to once during performance.

It is through empathy as the experience of oneself as an other for the alter-ego that one gains a viewpoint of one’s own embodied being beyond the first-person singular perspective (Thompson 2001, 19).

Key aspects for attending to movement and the kinetic structures of an experience during performance include:

- 1) The dynamics of a spatio-temporal depth structure including dimensionality: permutations of conversions in two- and three-dimensions;⁹⁷

⁹⁷ See my section on ‘The structure of relations between live and mediatised forms and their receptivity’ in Chapter 6.

- 2) Kinesthetic motivation: the apperceptive function of the “I can” in movement from an audience perspective. Thus, forming a structural aspect of kinesthetic empathy;
- 3) The interkinesthetic dimensions of receptivity: relational movement between spectator, performer, kinetic technologies, objects, and audience members.

In my workshops, each participant was asked to provide a nuanced account describing the performers moving with technology and the kinetic qualities of the technology as two-dimensional representations, audio output, or material objects; and to consider their own motion, or kinetic response in both roaming and seated performances. Creating a framework for embodiment that only addresses a corporeal, three-dimensionally live person is inadequate for understanding the relation between bodies and technologies. It is necessary to develop it in relation to the use of technology in performance. The following section attempts to integrate my working conceptual relation in light of this.

Bodily-schemata, Movement, and Technology in Performance

Neurologist Henry Head’s observation that “a body-schema can extend to the feather in a woman’s hat” directly captures how embodiment and bodily-schemata might extend to technologies mediating bodies in performative contexts (Gallagher 2005, 32).⁹⁸ Embodiment, in this sense, extends beyond the boundary of the skin. Head, writing in 1920, was referring to the then-current fashion for hats. My own experience of watching women walking the streets with feathers in their hats follows a day at the races in Randwick, the site of one of Sydney’s racecourses. By early evening, the streets of nearby Paddington crawl with inebriated women donning (ironically like proud peacocks) an array of feathers eagerly attempting to fascinate, (in fact, these decorations are named ‘fascinators’, presumably for their hypnotic role in race-day mating rituals) bobbing, jiggling and swaying upon their stiletto points. One need only watch the feather to ascertain the effect of several glasses of champagne on the constitution of their bodily movement. My point here is not to focus attention exclusively, or even primarily, upon the movement of the feather, but to suggest that technology can extend the human body visually, sonically and kinetically. If feathers or

⁹⁸ Reference found in Gallagher (2005, 32), also in Arbib (2003, 994): “a woman’s power of localization may extend to the feather of her hat”.

costume are material extensions of the human body, technological extensions (i.e. projections, shadows, amplified sounds) present *supra-extended embodiments*, a describable feature of experiences for performers and audience in digital technology events. Inspired by Merleau-Ponty, Susan Broadhurst writes:

[i]n digital practices, instrumentation is mutually implicated with the body in an epistemological sense. The body adapts and extends itself through external instruments. To have experience, to get used to an instrument, is to incorporate that instrument into the body. The experience of the corporeal schema is not fixed or delimited but extendable to the various tools and technologies which may be embodied (Broadhurst 2009, 9).

Don Ihde goes further:

[i]f I am right about the secret norm of a here-body in action, it should also be noted that such a body experience is one that is not simply coextensive with a body outline or one's skin [. . .] One's "skin" is at best polymorphically ambiguous, and, even without material extension, the sense of the here-body exceeds its physical bounds (Ihde 2002, 6).

In *Closer: Performance, Technologies, Phenomenology*, Susan Kozel re-evaluates the claim that in studies of virtual technology the body 'disappears' or is 'substituted' by technology. She describes several experiences of dancing with a range of new technologies in performance contexts. For Kozel, the physical body in most instances is extended by virtuality in a new kind of relationship with its body variations, an embodiment she describes in terms of the "electric body" (Kozel 2007). The body corporeal and its bodily-schemata ground the virtual body in a system of dependency, rather than displacing it. According to Kozel and theorists of virtual reality Randall Walser and Myron Krueger, the body's frontier is "no longer fixed, but highly flexible and constantly changing" (Kozel 2007, 101).⁹⁹ Walser and Krueger claim that most virtual reality experiences alter human perception because what is experienced as an 'out of body' or 'disembodied' experience—I see my body or parts of my body spatially and aurally extended elsewhere—is inevitably followed by a 'return to the body'. This returning movement to the body from a virtually supra-extended embodiment promotes a "lasting effect" as a direct consequence of the "outward motion on the reunited body" (Walser in Kozel 2007, 101). For Kozel, when viewing your moving body or limbs

⁹⁹ Also see Walser in Helsel & Roth (1991, 51-65)

streamed live in real time onto a screen or through a monitor, that image's sudden disappearance from the wall or from within the frame entails a return to the body that constitutes an awareness of the consistent physical presence of your own flesh, no longer supra-extended. This return effects an altered embodiment. In game technology use, virtual reality experiences, and wearable computer technologies, Kozel's position combats the widely held conviction that we become disembodied users only experiencing technologically-induced mental images. She understands embodiment within digital art practices as a genuine moment and movement between the material and immaterial. Drawing on the concept of 'flesh' in the later writings of Merleau-Ponty, she describes this vacillating movement as an alternate space where "[a]ll states of being and interaction swirl and encroach in a fluid play of degrees of materiality" (Kozel 2007, 125).¹⁰⁰

Seeking the deeper structures in instances of live mediated events:

[t]he body schema functions in an integrated way with its environment, even to the extent that it frequently incorporates into itself certain objects—pieces of the environment that would not be considered part of one's own body image (Gallagher 2005, 37).

With this in mind, the relationship of moving bodies with technology—along with the spectator who moves in empathetic responses—makes our experience of the body more complex and diverse. The relationship offers a unique pathway to understanding these deeper bodily structures in relations of reciprocity with reflected experiences of phenomena. Part of these deeper bodily structures within the spectator is the role of imagining in receptivity; it is to be understood in both an embodied and temporal way.

¹⁰⁰ "The flesh we are speaking of is not matter. It is the coiling over of the visible upon the seeing body, of the tangible upon the touching body, which is attested in particular when the body sees itself, touches itself seeing and touching" (Merleau-Ponty in Kozel 2007, 125).

Imagining is itself an embodied process. Within the domain of aesthetic representation, the myriad layers of perception in the reception of phenomena suggest that the spectator and the analyst pay attention to the role of imagining in these experiences. Rather than provide a static image of what imagination produces (e.g. a dog with three heads and a flaming tongue), the process of imagining should be rigorously described in the attending of the object-event: its emergence, its stable and shifting morphologies, its duration and associations, and its kinesthetic and kinetic qualities.

In aesthetic production, the acts of receptivity by an audience member or perceiver of an artwork plumbs—in a myriad of different and shared ways—the limits of that artwork’s being, or more specifically, its ontological moment of presentation. The role of imagining is found in all intentional perception of objects, whether actual or inexistent. When the thing in question is aesthetic, imaginings may expand exponentially beyond an object’s perspectival adumbration in normal perception, bloating that thing in rich and complex variation toward different determinations of buried invariance.¹⁰¹ This is what I consider to be imagination in fantasy. And it is arguably more prevalent in aesthetic experiences.

Consciousness that is not bound to the factual perception of individual situations is called fantasy; such consciousness can think up all sorts of examples for itself (Held 2003, 16).

In marking out the specific experience of a spectator, embodied imaginings are dynamically entangled with memories, and other intentional acts that provide a fuller picture of not only individual and intersubjective experiences constituting the phenomena of performance, but provide leading clues to the essential structures of the constituted objects towards which our attentions are directed, and by which they are seduced. For Edward S. Casey,

¹⁰¹ For example: I look at my coffee cup on the kitchen bench from a particular perspective. I register its shape, the well-defined contours of its handle, its colour, red, and that I experience it as my coffee cup. At a different time, the cup sits on the windowsill with a fresh cutting from the garden hugging its side. It gives itself with a different appearance even though it is the same coffee cup. The shape is different and the handle has almost disappeared, along with its previous purpose for holding coffee. The light from the window softens the redness to a pinkish colour, and the sides now appear white. These observations of perception involve a degree of imagination, and what is called in phenomenology the *free variation of imagination*: the phenomenon in all its variance adumbrating in perception one-sidedly with a possibility of many-sides (perspectival adumbrations). However, in registering these quite simple adumbrations of the thing’s appearance, I have not expanded my embodied imaginings to bloat the object beyond its identity in fantasy. A distinction must be drawn between imagination as free variation and imagining in embodied fantasy. The former plays a role in my phenomenological method and will be discussed in the upcoming section outlining methodology.

[i]magination as a fixed faculty is indeed dead, eviscerated in the “objective” accounts of many modern thinkers. But *imagining* is very much alive, its potency as an act manifesting itself in daily feats of fancy as well as in the production of poets (Casey 2000, 3).

In *Imagining: A Phenomenological Study*, Casey examines the experience of imagining, taken as a synonym for imagination, but delimited “in accordance with an intentional analysis” to remain phenomenological (Casey 2000, xxv). From rigorous descriptions of firsthand experiences of imagining, Casey eidetically uncovers the three-paired structure of “spontaneity/controlledness, self-containedness/self-evidence” and “indeterminacy” and “pure possibility” (Casey 2000, xii). In Husserl’s posthumously edited text *Phantasy, Image, Consciousness and Memory (1898-1925)*¹⁰², the essence of *phantasy* (imagination) is considered in its fundamental form as a ‘re-presentation’ along with memory and imaging, and is unlike the presentation of objects in normal perception.¹⁰³ The object of phantasy is something that does not exist, is unstable, and like the object of memory, “is seen as if through a veil or fog” (Brough 2005, xxxvii). Phantasy is “inventive”. The thing of phantasy does not exist as concrete and individual, like the unveiled one-sided appearance of an object in immediate perception. Imagination as phantasy is not hallucination. Where hallucination “masquerades as a perceived object”, phantasy is understood to be phenomenally different to perception in its structural aspects and inactual givenness (Brough 2005, xxxviii). In cases of phantasy we are aware that our imagination is at play and not in conflict with normal perception.

When we are absorbed in phantasying, we are not focused on the null character of the phantasy object, but as soon as we relate the phantasy object to present reality, we become aware that it is null, that “it is nowhere at all, not in any space, not in any time, and so on” (Brough 2005, xxxviii).

Casey is critical of Husserl’s structural understanding and null characterisation of phantasies coming to mind without any related sensation in their givenness. In this parochial positing of inactuality, imagining is taken only as an “image world” (Casey 2000, 2). By surveying everyday imagining, rather than the more *phantastical* imaging of a unicorn, Casey is able to

¹⁰² This is the translated text of the Husserliana series Volume XXIII originally edited by Eduard Marbach and which pulls together Husserl’s writings over thirty years on ‘perception, phantasy, image consciousness, memory and time’.

¹⁰³ There is no conceptual difference between phantasy and fantasy, only the spelling. To keep with the tradition of Husserl, I will continue to use phantasy in my discussion.

distinguish the success of imagining as a mental act from other mental acts prone to fallibility, such as: if I don't want to imagine a big black hairy spider, in the very act of not wanting to imagine, I imagine a big black hairy spider. Following Casey, my contention is that by focusing upon the experience of imagining (acts of imagining) rather than upon imagination as a mere mental image or picture devoid of sensation or movement, the role of embodiment as an intercorporeal relation surfaces more readily.

In accordance with receptive empathy within a performance context, the genesis of imagining can be either externally prompted by another person, an object, or technological representation (*genesis one*); or start from one's own emergent embodied imaginings (*genesis two*). The second genesis may then bear upon that which is constituted in perception, prompting further imaginings as an operation of genesis one. These two modes of genesis must not be taken as *a priori* structures, or determinative of imagining in a performance context. Positing two modes enables me to discuss imagining as embodied. My project requires an adequate method that takes into account the breadth of experience, including those veiled, absent or forgotten aspects, and those that resist phenomenological reflection. By and large, these hidden mysteries tend to be located in and through the body.

In genesis one, for example, the visual perception of a performer's hand gesture lit in a particular way moving on a variety of planes, at times suspended in a momentary stillness, changing shape through finger movements to represent (choreographically or as improvisationally emergent) something other than a mere hand moving in space. In accordance with Edith Stein's view of how we experience another as an embodied other, I might feel the morphological structure of this image empathetically and correlatively in sensation. For Stein, we first recognise the experience of another, and distinguish this other from other objects in sensual empathy. Second, we delve:

[i]nto the content of the Other's experience. If this happens, then there is a movement from empathy as the passive association of our two lived bodies to empathy as the imaginative transposal of myself to the place for the Other: 'my hand is moved (not in reality but "as if") to the place of the foreign one (Stein 1989, 27).¹⁰⁴

From visual and sensorial experiences of a hand gesture, our process of imagining may blow the image and our sensations into something more phantasmagorical. A creature, no longer a

¹⁰⁴ Edith Stein was Husserl's student and wrote her dissertation *On the Problem of Empathy* under his direction in 1916. Her main thesis is that we experience others as a unified whole through empathy.

moving hand (nor a hallucination) is presented from this empathetic relation between performer and spectator. In the case of external genesis, the imagining process is not a mental image that pops into the mind without a visual and sensorial prompt. The prompt could also be aural or the stimulation of our olfactory processes, for example, the burning of incense in a performance may cause the imagining of a creature like the Hindu god *Ganeshas*.¹⁰⁵

Genesis two is where imagining occurs without an external visual, sensorial, tactile, aural, or olfactory stimulus. I may form a process of imagining that begins from the senses, where they are not reflectively in the process of a perceptual act. Bodily orientations (and disorientations), proximities, levels, and positionality at a proprioceptive level in the spectator may generate embodied imaginings that affectively extend their external perception of objects. Pushing absurdity to make this point clear, if I am upside-down experiencing a performance, perceived objects may morphologically transform, generating imaginings beyond those perceptively formed in an upright position.¹⁰⁶ Rather than seeing three people suspended by their feet dancing upside down, I might see three dancing goats. By and large, the genesis of imagining is affected by this modification in embodiment. The three dancing goats may further affect the genesis of new imaginings that no longer relate to this proprioceptive disorientation.

Rather than abstractly determine two forms of genesis and their relationship to external perception and embodiment—explicit and/or tacit—I will attempt to describe and expand upon this relation from the phenomenological findings themselves. These two modes of genesis for imagining are not separable events. In the unity of experience, and in the speed of imagining, they (and possible other modes) are informatively entwined. I hope to draw out such modes in the interpretive work following the application of my method.

¹⁰⁵ For more on olfactory senses in performance see Banes in Banes & Lepecki (2007, 29-37).

¹⁰⁶ One might question the physiological limits to being upside-down for long periods of time, but anyone who has attempted inverted postures in yoga, trapeze, hung upside down from a horizontal bar in a park, or simply hung their head backwards off a couch or bed, can attest to enduring an upside-down posture.

Temporality & Imagining

I have at several times indicated that temporality looms large as a feature of this study. In order to consider the development of the conceptual relation *embodiment—embodied imaginings—writing embodiment*, I must acknowledge two aspects of temporal experience informed by the phenomenological tradition and by my earlier work on the temporality of audience experience during improvisational performances.¹⁰⁷ The first is the spectator’s *self-temporalising style*, and the second is the ‘past-futural’ schema for interpretive analyses of written texts to be discussed briefly in this section.

In Husserl’s 1905 lectures on time consciousness, the structure and content of consciousness itself is a temporal relation between “two lines of continuity” relating to the perception of an immanent object that is stable in perception. A piece of chalk is a stable object of perception and has ‘duration’ outside of its perception. If I look at the chalk, then close and open my eyes, there have been two perceptions of the same piece of chalk. It has temporally changed in terms of my lived experience: there is “temporal apartness” in the phenomenon, but no separation in the object itself because it has duration (Husserl 1964, 27). The duration of the temporal object in consciousness is a horizontal line that continuously advances with the perceptual experience of an object. The advance has a ‘run-off’ nature of the enduring object in original perception. The modes of running-off (or modifications) of an enduring immanent temporal object in this horizontal direction have a source point in ‘primal impression’. Husserl refers to this as the ‘just-now’. The ‘just-now’ of an impression

¹⁰⁷ In my Honours thesis entitled *A Call for Presence: a phenomenological investigation of audience-oriented temporalities in improvisational performance* (McNeilly 2006), I attempted to understand the structure of my own internal time consciousness as an audience member during improvisational performance by adapting Husserl’s model of internal time consciousness to these experiences. Despite problems created by carrying out the practical phenomenology as an isolated observer on the one hand, and ignoring objective time as a co-constitutive aspect of time on the other, I was able to (in part) develop a method for undertaking practical phenomenology; intuit, describe and analyse my experiences through a specific style of writing; and to understand audience-centered time in relation to memory and imagination. I was rigorous in bracketing out commonsense notions of time experience understood as ‘objective’ or constructed ‘measured’ time. In these instances I was only interested in paying attention to my own internal time consciousness. I found this to be problematic for many reasons, and on reflection, found that time constituted in the everyday (time in its common sense usage) should not be bracketed from the overall experience of the temporal, especially when considering performance-based phenomena. This particular shortcoming in the phenomenology of time experience is noted by Heidegger:

[b]ut what matters in the question concerning time is attaining an answer in terms of which the various ways of being temporal become comprehensible; and what matters is allowing a possible connection between that which is in time an authentic temporality to become visible from the very beginning (Heidegger 1992, 7E).

And elsewhere he suggests that “[w]hat we need first of all is a many sided orientation toward the time phenomenon, following the clue of the traditional time concepts” (Heidegger 1982, 230).

perception, expands a ‘continuity of pasts’ that uniformly sinks downwards into the depths of the past (Husserl 1964, 48-50). The horizontal phase, or first temporal phase in Husserl’s model, presents the objective or measured order of time “whose function is to measure appearing times and time-relations against one another” (Husserl 1964, 26). From within an audience, we may express these apprehensions of objective time by looking at our watches and making measured calculations using a clock system relevant to our culture. Time experience might also be expressed in the apprehension of ‘how long’ something feels, relative to measured time. A performance can often create a feeling that time is either moving quickly or slowing down, or has stopped altogether. The significance of this is in the difference between sensing how time passes relative to measurable time. A simple example is the experience of a quick first half and slow second half, despite equally measured temporal periods. These commonsense insights into time perception deal with the experience of time in a seemingly rudimentary and relativistic way. However, it is this naïve apprehension of how time passes that provides the fundamental clue to disclosing the structure of our internal time experience: the primordially of embodied consciousness.

This brings us to Husserl’s second temporal sequence, that of subjective time. Subjective, or ‘internal’ time consciousness is the overlooked temporal sequence that, along with objective time, co-constitutes Husserl’s model of time experience. The primal impression which constitutes the now moment in ‘present’ consciousness on the horizontal axis passes immediately into a ‘retentional’ mode. This downward vertical phase is the second line of continuity in Husserl’s model. Each of these retentions involve a continuity of retentional modifications “which, so to speak, bears in itself the heritage [*Erbe*] of the past in the form of a series of shadings” (Husserl 1964, 51). This means that retentions do not undertake a modification after each new primal impression; rather they are a continuous modification of the original perception. When a perception is over, retentions involved with the continuity of this duration are shoved back into the past from the original temporal field to a memory field of ‘imperceptibility’. This region is constitutive of primary memory, and the further that a retentional phase is from a ‘just-now’ point in perception, the further it is shoved back into the past.

The temporalities of individual perceptions relate to this second line and it is the temporal structure of consciousness in intentionality that matters for Husserl in all lived experiences. Similarly for me, it is the system of intentionalities—the misty horizons—that directly relate to something present to my consciousness while observing as an audience

member in performances, that which constitutes my *temporal style*. All experiences involve a complicated myriad of intentional memories, impressions, expectations, and imaginings. On Husserl's account, imaginings are 'quasi-actual', having "no connection in their objective relations either among themselves or with perceptions" (Husserl 1973, 168). Imaginings are not like past and present experiences. They are happenstance to the unity of experience: "it is not part of their essence that they must appear in a continuous enchainment" (Husserl 1973, 170). For example: my perceiving a hand tremble, then imagining a three headed dog (the recombination of real existents), followed by the immediate perception of the person whose hand is trembling, are all distinct acts of consciousness with respect to their relative temporal position. However, the existing objects of hand and person that I perceive have "strict localisation of position" in objective time; they have duration outside of my perceiving.

These 'run-off' phenomena of consciousness in Husserlian terms may only be captured as isolable rich slices in the overall unity of a particular marked moment. The goal is to explicate the process and movement of imaginings as both embodied and self-temporalising.

Language, Temporality, Imagining

In earlier research, a pattern of verbs emerged within my phenomenological language that described the corporeal, spatial and kinetic qualities of my internal time consciousness whilst watching improvisational performance. The sensations and movements that accompanied the temporal journey of memory, impressions, expectations, imaginings and other mental acts that I experienced were termed *verbs of kinesthesia*. I discovered that:

[c]orporeality and spatiality are implicitly coeval to internal temporality. Their unity is manifested in my embodied sensations while traversing my internal time-consciousness at these events. In several of my observations there occurred a disjuncture between my body's "postural schema" of 'audiencing' (turned attentively towards the performance) and the actual sensations of my embodied traversing (Lingis 1994, 13-14). Influenced by Husserl's analytic language (Husserl 1964), these latter experiences have been captured in the descriptions [. . .] through the following language use: *dips* backward, *drags* forward, *ripped* out of/away, *flung* into, *restored* back, *drops* away, *holding* in, *sinks* downward, *leaps* ahead, *pulling* back, *shoots* to, *jerk* forward, *lean* back-away, and *shoved* back (McNeilly 2006, 55).

This earlier research lacked the intersubjective dimension of embodied self-temporalising styles—something I address in my current project, but do not take as the primary object for

phenomenological examination. By identifying an embodied self-temporalising character in imagining, the structures of experience will be brought to attention in my design and application of the method, and subsequent textual analyses.

§2.4.6 WRITING EMBODIMENT

Writing from the new is writing from the void, and it amounts to a writing from our own bodies, from the moment to moment of our own existence (Kozel 2007, 8).

Susan Kozel writes phenomenological descriptions of an entwined embodiment while performing with new technologies. In describing events where she as performer interacts with low-tech and high-tech technologies, Kozel employs a particular style of first-person description in her phenomenological approach. She is influenced by the later work of Merleau-Ponty (*The Visible and the Invisible* 1968) and his concepts of *chiasma*, “flesh, reversibility, the invisible, and disequilibrium”, and the concepts of “reverberation, resonance and repercussion” in Gaston Bachelard’s *The Poetics of Space* 1969 (Kozel 2007, 24, 32). Kozel takes issue with the subordination (if not the exclusion) of first-person subjectivist descriptions by third-person objectivist language within interdisciplinary research. Methodologies from a range of disciplines “biology, psychology, philosophy, performance, mathematics, media, literature, cybernetics, visual art, music, architecture, and engineering” are appropriated and combined at a nexus of theory and practice in this style of research (Kozel 2007, 9-10). The body and its sensorium as experiential phenomena become a key problematic for finding a shared language and fluid system of conceptualisation and Kozel, along with many authors (to whom she alludes in her book *Closer* 2007), recognises and attempts to address this pertinent issue of first person description versus third person explanation. I too raise this issue in my discussions about reflection, self-awareness, body awareness and expressions that constitute some kind of self. However, I hold no expectation that my approach can solve this proper *aporia* within studies of consciousness. The most I can do is observe the issues and make a choice that is suitable to the task of firstly describing the shared object-event, then eidetically identifying the essential structures of the relationship between bodies and technologies from spectators’ experiences. In the spirit of phenomenology as a descriptive science, I have—unlike Kozel—taken the more Husserlian path of eidetic analyses. Nonetheless, Kozel’s elegant work is a landmark reference for my

study since she directly addresses embodiment, new technologies, dance, performance and the role of poesis in description.

There is no single method for phenomenological description. Casey argues that:

[w]hat is sought in the implementation of such a method is an accurate description of a given phenomenon as it presents itself in one's own experience, not an explanation of its genesis through reference to antecedent causal factors. The phenomenologist's basic attitude is: no matter how something came to be in the first place, what is of crucial concern is the detailed description of the phenomenon *as it now appears* (Casey 2000, 9).

A detailed description of phenomena as they appear to us in experience demands an adequate language style. In addressing Kozel's concern with third-person description as explanation, I agree that causal language should be challenged if it dilutes or ignores the gamut of experience, particularly where the body and its sensorium are concerned. And yet I wonder what we can learn from third-person narratives that describe experiences as though the one experiencing were an absent other, or where the personal pronoun 'I' becomes an object within description. What can we gain from accepting the experiencing 'I' as a 'she', 'he' or 'they'?

A language that neither wholly expresses the body as a non-experienced objectivity, or collapses the body as an ego-saturated "I think" or "I feel", would be a language that expresses the constituting and the constituted; whereby that which is constituted (the object for all intent and purposes) discloses something of the constituting. By and large, objectivity in experience is the other half of the experience, correlative to all subjective intending acts.

To challenge objectivist rejections of writings emerging from insider perspectives, Kozel directly asks "what if the object wants to speak?" (Kozel 2007, 133). Indeed, the 'I', the constituting individual of experience, is an object always in any reflection on that 'I's experience. Her question is a good one, and I can understand the pointedness and direction of it. However, putting this debate aside, I would like to focus upon what style of language the object uses to speak. Kozel is aware of the 'biased', 'narcissistic' and 'solipsistic' tendencies to which autobiographical writing is vulnerable; however, she demands that the dancer/performer voice no longer be silenced by the hegemonic words and opinions of critic and editor alike. In seeking Emmanuel Levinas, her call is an ethical one. And yet, it is not clear how positing an ethics that recognises a relationship between 'self and other'—not only in the space of the theatre, but between bodies, technologies and the marketplace—

ideologically salvages a preference for the 'I' expressing these experiences (Kozel 2007, 132-35).

In contrast, the phenomenological work and writings of Anthony J. Steinbock promote a more objectivist and formal language for expressing first-hand experiences of the moral emotions. The Husserlian and general philosophical language of analyses emerges from structuring experiences in their 'modality of Being', 'temporal orientation', 'temporal meaning' and 'self in relation to other'. The group sessions at the Phenomenology Research Center rely upon discussion, everyday examples, thinking that minimises presuppositions, remembering and the hypothetical imagining of instances. Unlike an experiential autobiographical approach, this method elaborates upon non-immediate experiences of the moral emotions such as guilt, pride, shame, and hope. Steinbock's approach is eidetic. His purpose is to disclose the essential structures of the experience of a range of moral emotions. The language is formal and technical.

While a retention may retain, say, a sense of pain (I twisted my ankle stepping off the curb or ruptured a tendon), and while a remembering may recall the past pain, guilt is an experience of terrible unpleasantness, sorrow, grief, e.t.c. in the new experience of guilt. This negative experience is "original" in the guilt and not necessarily contained in the past experience. There is an original contribution in guilt in relation to a remembering-experience that re-signifies the past, as it were, and this in part constitutes it as a new act (Steinbock 2008, 1).

This excerpt from preparatory notes sent to participants before the group meetings demonstrates how a subjective experience is to be probed in relation to the past. In this example Steinbock is attempting to show how guilt is unlike pain, in that it is not a retention. Some participants in the research group are familiar with the language of Husserl and his model of time-consciousness. When they are not, it is through the experience of participating in a shared language system over time that they become familiar with Steinbock's particular phenomenological approach and language style. My phenomenology examines a similar terrain of experiences to Kozel, but is oriented from within audience. My method proposes a synthesis of styles in phenomenological description from a review of current excursions in the writing of phenomenology from within studies of dance and technology (Brown 2006 and Kozel 2007) for example, and the philosophical examination of moral emotions from my experiences as a participant in the research group led by Steinbock. In the comfortable adoption of a Merleau-Pontian style of *fleshly* poetics, Kozel offers "images, metaphors [...]"

and a dynamic flow that transcends the words and speaks physically” (Kozel 2007, 126). In a phenomenology of her improvisation with *iVisit* technology, she writes:

I’m aware of my body in a poised and anticipatory posture, for a moment it seems as if I am living through my eyes, scanning the hesitant and unpredictable offerings of the windows my [*sic*] center exists somewhere between my body and the computer screen, between my screen and theirs— where is the locus of my movement? (Kozel 2007, 136)

Her approach lends itself to the type of phenomenological method that is less concerned with the eidetic structures of variance and invariance in the experiences of the performer. She also prefers the “non-void flux of finitudes, as a syrupy substance that contains and composes all our movement and perceptions” in a somewhat sticky and seductive slide to metaphor (Kozel 2007, 126). My own textual descriptions invite language to be a provocative player in play: language revered through an abuse of its rules. It would be interesting for Kozel’s studies to ascertain the intersubjective-corporeal phenomenologies between a community of players that she acknowledges to be dynamically entwined in her performing experience (Kozel 2007, 113). A disjuncture between performer and audience experience is evident in the one-sided accounts that create *Closer*. My work suggests the possibility of a wider, multi-‘fleshed’ attendance of dancing with digital technologies. And yet by only focusing on audience receptivity, I am equally open to a one-sided negligence. This suggests that a more inclusive phenomenology involving artist, performer and audience should take place at a future point in my research.

But for now, toward and from within the audience, I turn.

It is paramount to avoid shallow phenomenological description, that is, textual accounts that are left analysed as mere “scattered descriptive remarks” (Casey 2000, 9). To identify the essential structures of the relationship between live, corporeal and mediated forms means approaching the language of variance with systematic rigour. Variances offered from a community of players gathered together, writing and discussing their experiences of the same object-event. The language of variance can be poetic, somatic, detailed, incoherent or coherent, partial or complete, metaphoric or literal. At least for my purposes, it is the eventual examination of these writings that move my phenomenology towards structural invariance and rigorous phenomenological understanding.

The Language of Receptivity

As human beings we communicate our experiences predominately through language. Phenomenology is constrained by the fact that language fails to express all of our thinking. Husserl was aware of the limits of language for thinking: “[t]he human being does not express all of his psychic life in language nor can he express it through it” (Husserl 2001, 13). This raises the question: what other modes of expression can be sought to communicate this understanding? Kozel suggestively asks:

[c]an phenomenology take the form of a dance? of visual or sonic media? The question relates to how the act of hyper-reflection, where concepts begin to be elaborated in and through experience is materialized into form. Most frequently it is written form, but the question raised is whether other expressive forms such as choreography, images, or music can also be phenomenological documents (Kozel 2007, 28).

Recognising that I am unable to move beyond language in the production of a dissertation, the idea that a different kind of language may be sought to communicate experiences comes to the fore. Both Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty desired a new language of Being in their phenomenologies of Being and perception respectively. In performance, it is the language of receptivity that I am most curious about: the multiple shadings of many consciousnesses sharing in the *every expanse of a presence*, held then sprung from a ‘determined there’ into an infinite indeterminability (Husserl 1989, 52). Apposite to this notion, Erin Manning in *Relationescapes: Movement, Art, Philosophy* discusses the relationship between thought, language and movement. For language to be expressive there must be a constant return to the realm of pre-articulated thinking.

When movement converges into its taking-form, or when thought converges into words, very little potential for creative expression remains. This is not to suggest that language cannot express creatively. It means that to remain post-iteratively creative, language must continue to express itself in a realm where thought remains prearticulated, where concepts continue to evolve. We must conceive of language as the eternal return of expression in the making (Manning 2009, 4-5).

Casting a more Husserlian light on this idea, language results from a movement between passive and active perception. The synthesis is itself a movement. When Husserl promulgated phenomenology as a fundamental science to philosophy, he referred to it as a ‘new world’, ‘a new style of attitude’.

To move freely in it without relapsing into the old attitudes, to learn to see, distinguish, and describe what lies within view, require, moreover, peculiar and laborious studies (Husserl 1983, XIX).

Interestingly, there is an implicit embodiedness to Husserl's statement. "To move freely in it" suggests phenomenological thought as an embodied imagining: the movement of phantasing a new world, rich in perspectival variance, and deep in the peculiar. This is the choreography of a man who perhaps never danced on his feet, but only with the articulated rhythms of consciousness. Possessed with the desire to describe the immanent formal structures and movement from objective grounds, Husserl was tied to the possibility of describing the multi-storied architecture of a constituting consciousness, in the first instance, then turned to dance with others in the world in his more generative elaborations.

In an example of writing expressing the movement of embodied imaginings and their extensions of corporeal experience within digital performance, choreographer and New Zealand-based Academic Carol Brown interprets the freedom of dancing with her interactive camera-based system *spawn*.¹⁰⁸

In dancing with creatures of code it is tempting to suggest that we are no longer confined by our bodies' volume, weight, gravity and matter, that we are free to choose the extension of ourselves, to dance amongst the starfish of different skies (Brown 2006, 97).

Brown understands the potential of the imaginary in mediatised spaces. It is an imaginary that goes beyond the bounds of normal embodiment and challenges the dominant cultural forms inscribed in our gestures.

One of the important aspects of going to see live performance is to be bought into proximity with embodied histories and to be inspired by the invention of new movement memories [. . .] Within the technological theatre, the imaginary has a space to play and create that has not as yet always been written upon by the globalizing tendencies of mainstream art practices and the imperializing gestures of the past, including the dominance of the mainstream (Brown 2006, 95).

Brown's writings suggest virtual agency and a widened range of possibilities for the performer to create movement and choreographies that embody new sensations, external and internal morphologies, speeds, and textures that are generally restricted in non-virtual spaces.

¹⁰⁸ The visualisations for this system were created with architect Mette Ramsgard Thomsen. For more on Carol Brown's reflective and critical writings as a performer in virtual spaces see Brown (2006) and website (Brown 2008).

The performer's consciousness becomes adumbrated in new ways whilst entangled with these external virtual systems. A certain materiality of the virtual is palpably met through the dancer. Brown and Kozel solely focus upon the dancer/performer and choreographer's relationship to technology, but in widening this perspective towards receptive empathy within audience, the object-event can be described in terms of the fluxing, temporally embodied imaginings experienced by the players at *play* in the co-constituting of events. As argued through Gadamer in Chapter 2, audiences are equally responsible for the ontological status of an object-event. Thus to intuit, describe and analyse the essential structures of an object event, a phenomenology of "bodies, thought, imagination, memories, [and] material conditions of life" must reorient to include experiences from within audience (Kozel 2007, 5).

Paying Attention to Embodiment in a Mediatized Object-event

To demonstrate the relevance of the formulation *embodiment—embodied imaginings—writing embodiment* in relation to my methodology, I present fourteen preliminary questions that have helped to refine my method for future application in research and practice¹⁰⁹ (Chapter 5 and 6) and directly assisted in my analysis of writings from the *Poetics of Reception Project* (Chapter 7).

The questions outlined below became a means for me to analyse participants' writings eidetically. They inquire into the bodily constitution of a spectator while attending performance, and are questions not requiring answers, but an orientation. Participant experiences were presented to me as prose, literal description and poetics. The personal pronoun 'I' used in these questions represent the spectator's perspective, and what I eventually asked of their texts:

- 1) How aware am I of my body? What can I consciously reflect upon?
 How can I describe it?
- 2) At what points during the performance do I become aware of my
 bodily experience?
- 3) Can I describe the limits to bodily awareness? At what point does the
 body disappear in my awareness?
- 4) Is being aware of my embodiment a case of felt 'sensation'? Where is
 this situated? How can I describe these sensations?
- 5) Are there any clues for prenoetic activity: the *kinesthesias* or
 proprioception? Are they felt or imagined? Is there something different
 in my movement and stillness that I am aware of?

¹⁰⁹ I intend to develop this ongoing refined model as a method for new dramaturgy in digital performances. Chapter 6 discusses the iterative nature of my phenomenological method through two case studies where I experimented with my approach to phenomenology in different contexts. These case studies were not directly part of the workshops themselves, but have informed the manner in which I practised phenomenology over the last four to five years.

- 6) What movements, sensations, proprioceptive activities are repressed in receptivity? If I could move, how would I?
- 7) How do I visualise my body during receptivity?
- 8) Where am I temporally? What memories, expectations or imaginings am I having while attending as audience? Can I describe my *self-temporalising style*? Is there a connection between images and sensations?
- 9) Can I indicate a genesis for imaginings in the body? Is it an external or internal genesis? Does it express prenoetic activity?
- 10) How does a live body performing affect my temporal embodied imaginings?
- 11) How does a virtual/screen body or image affect my temporal embodied imaginings?

Extending these questions to consider the *interkinesthetic* dimensions of an experience, I then asked on behalf of the spectator:

- 12) What aspects of the *live* performer in their movement and potential movement affect my actual and imagined movement?¹¹⁰
- 13) What aspects of the *screen/virtual* performer in their movement and potential movement affect my actual and imagined movement?

¹¹⁰ The distinction between actual and imagined body finds a close terminological synonym with Ihde's VR body (Virtual Reality), also referred to as the 'image-body' or 'over-there body'. The actual body corresponds to his RL body (Real Life) or 'here-body' (Ihde 2002, 3-15).

- 14) What aspects of the interaction between live bodies and screen/virtual/mediatised elements in movement, affect my actual and imagined movement?¹¹¹

My purpose in this chapter has been to draw attention to the felt, imagined and lived body of the spectator in instances of phenomenological study. The essential structures and relation between phenomena are understood only through a close examination of the body entwined and engaged at a deeper level of organisation (bodily-schemata); a more passive, sensorially felt and moving body interacting with other persons, such as the performer and other audience members (inter-kinaesthetic); and a body comprised of felt imaginings with its own memories and futural protentions (self-temporalising style). These preliminary insights into embodiment help to narrow the experiential gap between the perceiver and the perceived. Perceiving objects or other persons in the world always involves variegated relations of a spatial, kinesthetically felt, temporal and imagined kind. In this chapter, I considered how we might become aware of these bodily experiences, and how we might talk or write about them with a degree of veridical integrity. I proposed that writing embodiment involves expressing the bodily experience of the spectator—whose experience we are foregrounding—and their description of external bodily phenomena such as the movement and presencing of performers and their virtual partners.

To conclude, the relation *embodiment—embodied imaginings—writing embodiment* provides a conceptual framework for first, designing a method for phenomenological investigation; and second, for analysing the written expressions of embodiment within the participants' texts more responsively and with responsibility towards persons that are ambiguously both objects of reception and unique, constituting subjects in their own right.

¹¹¹ Mediatised elements may include non-human, real-time or pre-recorded projections of moving grid lines (or other geometric, rhizomic patterns) affected by the interactivity of the performer.

SECTION 3

CONSTRUCTING

Writing in the latter half of last century, Herbert Spiegelberg outlined the problem of defining phenomenology in the opening chapters of his text *The Phenomenological Movement* (1971).¹¹² He identifies phenomenology as a “moving discipline” . . . “a ‘movement’ of several phenomenologies, where the common point of departure for early thinkers did not necessitate the same “predictable joint destination” (Spiegelberg 1971, 2). Motivated by his desire to identify what was essential to the movement, Spiegelberg proposed and later implemented a practical method in a series of workshops conducted at Washington University, Missouri, documented by Edward S. Casey in his article “Sym-Phenomenologizing: Talking Shop”.¹¹³

Spiegelberg’s historical and contextual writings on the movement are an invaluable starting point for outlining the design and implementation of my method, a method that attempts to ascertain phenomenologically the relations between and the essential structure of bodies and technology in live, mediatised performance. It is a method that begins with the description of experienced phenomena in a series of workshops, in which participants employ a style of Husserlian reductionism—“phenomenology in the strictest sense” (Spiegelberg 1971, 6). The method further examines the essential structures of the selected phenomena through an analysis of written descriptions of experiences produced by participants of the workshop.

In Chapter 3, I closely traced the development of Husserl’s own work from a static, constitutional philosophy to a genetic and generative approach. In this chapter, I will synthesise the relationship between the processes of constituting object phenomena and a genetic analysis of the self-temporalising aspects of an experience, with the practical aspects of an applied method in the study of performance phenomena, namely the object-event. Given my already lengthy expositional glance at phenomenological theory, I will avoid

¹¹² Spiegelberg first traces this development firstly in *The Phenomenological Movement: A Historical Introduction* (1971), then ten years later in *The Context of the Phenomenological Movement* (1981).

¹¹³ “To do phenomenology in a workshop is to do it together; it is to engage in what Husserl once called, in a postcard written to Herbert Spiegelberg in 1935, “sym-philosophizing” (Casey 1997, 171).

making a potted history of the phenomenological movement and its expansion within and outside philosophy.¹¹⁴

To begin, I will briefly discuss the phenomenological approach of Herbert Spiegelberg and group practice more generally. I will then introduce my research project for examining the relationship between bodies and technology: *A Poetics of Reception: phenomenological writings from within audience*. The aims, outcomes, background information for participants and initial design of the project's method will be outlined and discussed in a retrospective analysis of each stage in its implementation over a four-year period. The stages of the workshop for live mediated performance include: (I) preparation (II) attending (III) the writing workshop and (IV) an informed written account. This evaluative outline will permit me to discuss the constantly changing, iterative nature of phenomenological method experienced as experimental design.

My practice of phenomenology has a strict groundedness within *transcendental phenomenology*. The concepts of Husserl combined with the 'beyond the theoretical armchair' practices of Spiegelberg, frame this experimental methodology in order to examine experiences communicated through the written word. Contemporary scholar of the human sciences Max van Manen identifies six different *orientations* within phenomenology, two of which are towards the transcendental and practical.¹¹⁵ Van Manen's generous taxonomy of the different styles of phenomenology accords with Spiegelberg's positive capitulation of phenomenology as a movement, and is useful in understanding the various approaches of scholars within the history and current epoch of doing phenomenology.¹¹⁶ As a common departure point each of these approaches advocate direct intuition and description of phenomena while claiming special insight into their essential structures. However, it is through differing systems (i.e. language, perception, being, and interpretation) and an ordering of these intuited aspects that philosophical problems may be solved in their peculiar way.

By combining a transcendental approach with a practical method it is possible to seek a more thorough understanding of the relationships between corporeal bodies and

¹¹⁴ Outside of the philosophical discipline, phenomenology has had a major influence on fields such as psychiatry, nursing, non-behavioural based psychology, and pedagogical research. See Giorgi (1970 & 1985), Thomas & Pollio (2001).

¹¹⁵ Van Manen champions the application of phenomenology in pedagogical studies and the health sciences. The six orientations he identifies include: transcendental, existential, hermeneutical, linguistic, ethical and experiential (phenomenology of practice). See <http://www.phenomenologyonline.com/inquiry/1.htm>

¹¹⁶ Van Manen refers to these orientations pluralistically as 'movements', rather than as a single movement. See also Van Manen (2002).

technological forms, relationships that current approaches caught in the crossfire of the live and mediatised debate have struggled to conceptualise. My task in this section is to introduce the design and implementation of a practical method applied from within audience; the development of my practical method results from a confluence of ideas and experiences that include readings of Herbert Spiegelberg (1971, 1981); my participation in the Phenomenology Research Group on the moral emotions led by Anthony J. Steinbock (2008, 2010-11); written documentation of phenomenology groups by Edward S. Casey (1997); the transcendental phenomenology of Husserl; the experimental phenomenology of Don Ihde (1977), and previous work undertaken by myself and other researchers from the Department of Performance Studies at the University of Sydney (2005-6).¹¹⁷

§3.5.1 ESSENTIALS OF THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL METHOD

In mapping out the main tenets of the phenomenological enterprise, Spiegelberg also outlines “[t]he essentials of the phenomenological method” (Spiegelberg 1971, 653-701). His seven steps include: 1) investigating particular phenomena; 2) investigating general essences; 3) apprehending essential relationships among essences; 4) watching modes of appearing; 5) watching the constitution of phenomena in consciousness; 6) suspending belief in the existence of phenomena; and 7) interpreting the meaning of phenomena (Spiegelberg 1965, 659). He claims that the method makes it possible for the practising phenomenologist to follow Husserl’s famous formulation to ‘get back to the things themselves’ and *see* the ‘many-sidedness’ of constituted things. Questioning the “originality” of phenomenology, Spiegelberg indicates the uniqueness of this kind of analysis with regard to approaches such as those of the discipline of psychology and the empirical sciences, which also employ techniques to observe, intuit and describe phenomena. What is particularly special about phenomenology is that all phenomena and objects are given in a manifold of ways; that is, despite appearing to us one-sidedly, there are infinite ways in which the object could appear and be apprehended. By acknowledging this premise, we are already affording for the phenomena or object a rich and open-ended variance, a variance that is traditionally truncated by the sciences through reductive approaches. Sciences, observes Spiegelberg, tend to start

¹¹⁷ I am indebted to Dr Stuart Grant for introducing me to the practice of phenomenology in a Performance Studies context.

“with simplifying abstractions and end with a minimum vocabulary of scientific concepts” (Spiegelberg 1965, 658). The many possible perspectival shadings of an object pose for any study a more diverse manifold of structures to make manifest. By and large, practising *group phenomenology*—where the experiences of more than one phenomenologist are taken into account—maximises the potential variance of an object or phenomena in the pursuit of their finer structures.

Phenomenology takes into account a matrix of experience rather than the phenomenon or object in isolation; it is concerned with the entire environment in which a particular activity or process occurs or develops. Consequently the matrix of experience should not be elided at the outset by a singular perception of an object in its primordial objectivity. Rather, we must ‘build up’ the phenomenological picture from a constitutional procedure that takes into consideration the more founding genetic structures of passive and active perception within the experiencing ego: our self-temporalising style and embodied imaginings. The structural aspects of experience along with the constituted object-event are brought into greater relief through the applied techniques of a phenomenological and attentional reduction and the subsequent *generative writing* process of written description.

In my method, generative writing is a process that takes an experience from its immediate description to a meaningful interpretation and understanding of the artwork in terms of its receptivity. It requires that the writer (spectator/analyst) participates in specialised workshops to slow down their interpretive processes. Artificial constraints are then imposed upon the immediate experience and writing sessions following performance. The French Literary Group *Oulipo* (formed in 1960), in their search for an alternative to the surrealist movement in literature, placed a range of constraints (some mathematical) on writing methods in order to spark new ideas and promote invention in their “Workshop of Potential Literature”.¹¹⁸ This method of placing constraints on the structure of writing to free the language (a freedom-constraint paradox) influences my approach to the writing of experiences. The act of broadening through limitations in the *Poetics of Reception* workshops attempts to achieve openness by ‘focusing’ and ‘bracketing’ during the attendance and writing stages. The latter is a transposition of the ‘bracketing’ and ‘suspension of judgment’ strategies required in the earlier stages of attending.

¹¹⁸ See Consenstein (2002).

Spiegelberg pioneered practical phenomenology workshops in the latter half of the Twentieth Century in a University context, involving faculty, other students and visiting scholars. Group phenomenology continues under the direction of Anthony J. Steinbock in the Phenomenology Research Center, where I was located as a research scholar for fifteen months (2010 to 2012).¹¹⁹ In Performance Studies, Dr Stuart Grant conducts group phenomenology on comedy and laughter with students at Monash University, Melbourne, Australia.

In “Sym-Phenomenologising: Talking Shop” (1997), Casey describes Spiegelberg’s five summer workshops at Washington University between 1967 and 1972. Each day would proceed with a group meeting for “common practice studies” in the course of which they were asked to describe their experiences in written form. These notes would be compared in a group discussion. In the afternoons they would retire to their rooms for a longer write-up of the morning’s practice. The type of phenomenon to which they attended varied from static architectural objects to such things as “listening to silence” (Casey 1997, 175). Casey notes that the topics chosen often varied, with single topics continuing throughout the week to be repeated the following year.¹²⁰ The most significant aspect of the group’s discussion process for Spiegelberg was the attempt at “group attunement” of dissonant experiential accounts. This is likened to the tuning of instruments in a band or orchestra to rule out instances of playing out-of-tune. Spiegelberg notes that with “discrepant accounts” of experience it is a case of attuning the language.

Mutual exploration may reveal that the instruments of description are out of tune, and that a readjustment of the linguistic tools can clear up some of the discrepancies (Spiegelberg in Casey 1997, 176).

I noticed in the *Poetics of Reception* workshops that the language style in descriptions varied noticeably between accounts. This occurred despite the fact that everyone attended the same event, and received exactly the same information and examples of how they were to proceed

¹¹⁹ I elaborate upon my experiences and the more influential aspects of the study group with Steinbock from my first visit in late August 2008 in Chapter 6.

¹²⁰ In comparison, Steinbock’s phenomenology research group focuses upon one theme over two semesters. For the past nine years, Steinbock has been concerned with the moral emotions. In 2008, I was introduced to Steinbock’s method on the moral emotion of guilt. The Fall and Spring semesters of 2010 and 2011 were an examination of pride, following the 2009-10 theme of shame that I followed by reading each session’s notes sent by email.

with phenomenological description. The process of readjusting the linguistic expressions to ascertain the invariant structures of phenomena that the language in its great variance refers to will be demonstrated in Chapter 7. Hints for undertaking this analytic process are not readily found in Spiegelberg's writing, or in Casey's documentation of these original workshops. Spiegelberg was committed to furthering phenomenological description in the workshops from the unexpected and constantly changing results of the many experiences. Casey notes that "[d]oing phenomenology is doing something that is recursive in character" (Casey 1997, 176), an experience of *sym-phenomenologising* that I too have encountered.

Even though my method is inherently recursive and emergent in nature, its foundation has precedence in the historical work of Spiegelberg and my exposure to other methods of group phenomenology, and develops in accordance with my practice of the method over four years.

§3.5.3 POETICS OF RECEPTION PROJECT

I have distilled Spiegelberg's seven steps into three informing the various stages of the *Poetics* workshops (1) intuition and receptivity (2) description and (3) examination and relations. Over the remainder of this chapter, I will present a time-line of my research design detailing the aims, expected outcomes, recruitment of participants and what was required of them; and explain the original 'info-pack' through a reflective process of documentation.

Aims of the *Poetics of Reception Project*

- (1) To conduct a series of writing workshops with recruited participants in order to investigate the phenomenologically elaborated experiences of live, mediated performance while being in audience.
- (2) To refine a practical method for group-based phenomenology in the discipline of Performance Studies.
- (3) To investigate the immediate data of experiences through the descriptive and phenomenologically treated language of written accounts.
- (4) To approach an understanding of dance performance through non-critical based systems of inquiry, and to trial and develop a method of 'generative writing', which is a process that takes an experience from its immediate description to a meaningful interpretation and understanding of the art work in terms of its receptivity.
- (5) To undertake group phenomenology through writing rather than solely through discussion. Writing liberates the communication of thought and experiences from any shyness or anxiety that verbal discussion between members of a group can promote. Group discussion can often be dominated by confident speakers who unintentionally prevent the expression of those who find speaking about their thoughts difficult. What is missed in discussion is found more readily in written accounts.

- (6) To generate data in the form of a diverse collection of un-edited written accounts for the eventual identification and analysis of essential aspects common to being within audience at selected events. These aspects will be further analysed to elaborate upon the interactive relations between corporeal bodies and technological forms in performance.

Expected Outcomes

It was proposed that this study would:

- (1) Facilitate a more rigorous experiential based means for understanding the relationship between live and mediatised forms in performance.
- (2) Develop and refine a practical method for ‘writing dancing’ from within audience while resisting a critical and evaluative process. Establishing a systematic phenomenological approach to writing performance reviews.
- (3) Address the problem of the ‘immediacy’ of writing about experiences of performance while being within audience.
- (4) Expand the attentions of an audience member to account with finer distinctions their embodiment and the embodiment of performers experienced in the object-event.

Recruitment of Participants

Initially, I anticipated that two separate groups, consisting of four participants, would attend two live performances each. I was interested in recruiting participants with diverse conceptual and theoretical backgrounds that informed their work, field of study, artistic practice, intellect, their everyday and/or spiritual life. I thought this would diversify the written accounts in the later stage of the process and demonstrate how different systems of knowledge assist or resist phenomenological reduction.

I made a shortlist of suitable participants, decided upon a public dance performance that involved live dancing and interactive digital technology, and then wrote a letter of invitation by email. Once I received positive responses from four participants (indexed as P1,

P2, P3 and P4) ‘Group A’ was formed; we then coordinated a suitable date and time to view the performance. I booked tickets and a venue for the workshop and prepared material for the session. My plan was to have four sessions with two separate groups (two sessions each) completed in an eight- to twelve-month period.

I had difficulties in engaging participants with very different backgrounds. All individuals for Group A had some kind of professional performance experience, were tertiary educated (two with PhDs), and were well-known to me as colleagues or friends. I realised very quickly that by pursuing a research project with no funding, my pool of participants would prove to be limited. Despite covering ticket costs, transport, and providing snacks, the motivations for participation varied: doing me a favour; interest in the practical application of phenomenology; writing in a workshop scenario; and wanting to see the performance. From responses received in this first session, I realised the criteria for making future invitations should be formed from these motivations. If I had external funding for the project, engaging participants from diverse occupational and cultural backgrounds may have been possible. And yet the results were not compromised by the fact that every participant in the three workshops and two pilots had some kind of performance background. They had a diverse mix of educational, cultural, spiritual and occupational experiences—including their differing approaches to performance practice. Incidentally, I had to work harder in guiding the groups to suspend their preconceptions, critical evaluations and quick to form interpretations about phenomena experienced in a context they knew very well.

What was required of the participants?

On accepting their invitation to commit to two public performances, participants were sent a *Poetics of Reception Information Pack* (‘info-pack’) to read before their first session. The pack provided a brief background to phenomenology and outlined procedures for practising the method in this specific research context. It contained the following documents: “Background to Phenomenological Method as Practice: the innocence of first seeing”; “Top Tips for a phenomenological and attentional reduction during performance”; “Top Tips for Writing Phenomenological Descriptions”; “Directives for take-home Writing Task C”; and “Samples of Phenomenological Writing” from individual and group-based work conducted over the last two years. My main objectives were to make the information accessible while not losing the theoretical import of the research project. Phenomenology was not a foreign term to participants, insofar as they had all heard of this philosophical discipline before. The

practice was new to most, however, and I was careful to make each feel confident in their abilities to undertake the proposed activities and contribute to the analysis that I was intending to make. The procedural aspects of the document were somewhat didactic. The workshops were sessions to teach participants how to do phenomenology. After piloting the method with one participant prior to the first workshop, I understood that there were issues with communication, and consequently isolated what was unclear or unnecessary. The first pilot session allowed me to rewrite some of the documents. This background information and the procedure of the method were improved after several applications. Some of these changes will be discussed in Chapter 6.

The document opened with the following equation:

An Algorithm for first seeing:

$$\text{Opening} = \text{bracketing} + \text{focusing}$$

The observer and writer must bracket out any judgments that may colour or close down their experience in a critical way. They must strive to break with their habitual view of the world and attempt to shut-out preconceived ideas of every sort and consider at the most passive level of their experience the actual contents of the performance perceived in their immanent relationships with each other. Secondly, this study is interested in the overall structure of a perceiving consciousness. By paying attention to the constitution of phenomena in embodied consciousness through our perceptions and the related complicated myriad of memories, imaginings, and expectations, we are mapping the temporalising aspect of what it is to attend or *be-there-with* at a performance event.¹²² This is paramount to understanding the artwork in its receptive constitution of which my overall research hopes, in part, to disclose.

A Phenomenological Reduction: To Bracket

My engagement with phenomenological reductionism in this research project is primarily practical. My approach is to take on the ‘task’ or ‘process’ of this supposedly presuppositionless ‘grounded science’ and enable access to a more primordial experience of the event: the very first place of contact for participants.

¹²¹ The text below is as it appeared in the first workshop information pack for participants attending *GLOW* (2007). By the third workshop, the text became more streamlined, less theoretical with certain terms clarified as a result of specific questions and confusions from participants. See Appendix A for the updated info-pack distributed to participants for the third workshop in 2009.

¹²² At the time, I was reading a lot more Heidegger than Husserl. My term *being-there-with* describes our being-in-the-world in a specifically delimited event: the performance, with other audience members, performers and objects we co-constitute. My eventual departure from Heidegger’s thought did not dispense with this term, as it was never a problem for participants to understand or feel the sense of *being-there-with* the performance phenomena and other audience members.

Treating the phenomenological reduction as a practice and not an epistemological strategy *per se*, I believe the bonds of cultural thinking and theoretical judgments that reify and condition phenomena into concepts and expressions far from their essential nature as experienced can be challenged. At least by disclosing our attendance of these events and the phenomena toward which we make our inquiry we can get closer to an understanding of the performance as it is revealed to us in its immediacy: in our live reception of it. The process of bracketing requires the participant to actively suspend prejudices in order to open onto the phenomena in a more intuitive way. This act of suspension can be understood as shelving regions of knowledge: putting aside those concepts and theoretical systems that help us account for our experiences in the world to describe this immediate contact. These knowledges can then be pulled off the shelf at a later phase of writing and reintroduced with the experience of this phenomenologically reduced account.

Performing an Attentional Reduction – To Focus

To perform an attentional reduction one must possess an *active turn of regard* towards specific objects of concern. This requires a heightened mode of attentional focus on phenomena and their relationships than is practised in the everyday.

The postural disposition for an active turn of regard equates to the simple bodily comportment of facing toward the performance as a seeing, hearing, thinking, imagining, reminiscing (perhaps even dozing) audience member in active reception.¹²³ In perceiving the stage/performance area contained of elements both live and virtual in complex relationships of performative play, we are also required to pay attention to the structures of our own relationship to the perceiving of these phenomena such as our ‘style of comportment’ (emotional, cognitive, instinctive and kinesthetic) and our overall presence: the *being-there-with*.

The following scenario was written to provide attendees with a concrete example of what to do if they were to become distracted during the performance.

¹²³ This is not an exhaustive account of the possible ways that an audience member in their “postural schema” attends (Lingis 1994, 13-14). However, most events (including interactive systems) involve a turning toward the place(s) of performative action constituting an interface between audience member and performer or performance object.

A simple everyday scenario of becoming attentive: dealing with the ‘losing touch’

It may be the case that we are paying attention by listening to the news on the radio: the content of what is being said, while allowing thoughts, images and ideas to grow within that frame of attention. Our attentional focus may be widened to include other phenomenal features like the announcer’s voice, radio static, the surrounding interior architecture of the room, our bodily relation to other objects, and the mental images or thoughts that form and disappear. It may be the case that this flow or unity of perceptions where listening is engaged—though withdrawn from our actual awareness—is interrupted/distracted by a person walking into the room asking a question. This may break our attention momentarily as we are forced by this rupture to listen to what is new to our hearing, even if we do not want to. Interested in the continuity of the news report, we might then seek to regain that active turn of regard toward listening by redirecting our attentions to the newsreader’s voice, the words spoken from the radio, rather than the voice and words of the interrupting family member. We do this by assembling our bodily comportment actively toward the radio in a listening embodiment, which brackets out the perceived distraction that is still heard in the background.

Similarly, in paying attention to the phenomena at hand during the performance we may be distracted or interrupted from attending. This is of course part of our overall experience, but in the spirit of reduction and placing constraints on our attendance we must try to bracket out these distractions that lure us away from the selected elements and relations significant to the inquiry.

During the second performance with Group A, a young boy was noisily eating chips in a seat nearby. The little performance endured for an entire packet. We were all drawn from our attentions of the main performance intermittently and spent some time laughing about it in the workshop. This was much to one participant’s chagrin, who wrote:

[s]hoot the kid eating chips—shit what an inconsiderate crap mother—you are not allowed to feature in this [P2, E].

As previously mentioned, the three steps synthesised from Spiegelberg's seven are discussed below. Step three will be further elaborated in the closing section of this chapter as it informs the textual analysis demonstrated in Chapter 7.

1. **Intuition + Receptivity**

Intuiting phenomena is not a mystical, unconscious operation; it is a deliberate attempt to access phenomena at a more passive level of perception before the thinking really starts.¹²⁴ Our intuition into what unfolds seeks support in the structure and constraints of the bracketing and suspension of preconceptions and prejudices. It is not a case of 'registering [phenomena] by sense organs to explain the 'whatness' or causal nature of an object in relation to another object or our own perceptions of some event (Spiegelberg 1965, 660-661). Rather, the receptivity involves an awareness of your whole being in the embodied 'experience' of the thing. The mind in its thinking can very quickly enumerate and extrapolate away from the experience to satisfy familiar modes of understanding. This creates an ontological distance. Such a closure on access to the things themselves is what we seek to avoid by employing these simple yet tough techniques.

Intuiting consists in the methodical inspection of entire series of phenomena with a view to discovering the "manifold structural similarities" between them. But it also pays careful attention to their subtler differences (Spiegelberg 1965, 670).

2. **Description**

Phenomenological description is difficult and appears to undermine the notion of approaching phenomena from a 'pre-predicative' place. "A description presupposes a framework of class names, and all it can do is to determine the location of the phenomenon with regard to an already developed system of classes" (Spiegelberg 1971, 673). In other words the system of language we use will always permeate our descriptions. However, it is possible that a new language exists which allows the phenomenological description to "serve

¹²⁴ It is not expected that in laying constraints upon and paying strict attention to our normal perceiving we can access and articulate in language with any certainty the most passive layer of perception. However, in our attempts at 'bracketing and opening' to look at performance phenomena, we will be closer to "remaining faithful to them before even thinking about them" (Casey 1997, 179).

as a reliable guide to the listener's own actual or potential experience", or less conservatively: writing towards a new poetics of reception (Spiegelberg 197, 673).

The following quote both typifies and mitigates through acknowledgment the difficulty of such an approach.

Phenomenology begins in silence. Only he who has experienced genuine perplexity and frustration in the face of the phenomena when trying to find the proper description for them knows what phenomenological seeing really means (Spiegelberg 1971, 672)

3. Examination + Relations

By bracketing and focusing while being intuitively receptive we can isolate the phenomena under investigation and make apparent what is essential to their inherent structures. As Spiegelberg noted "it does not in any sense demand dissecting them into separate parts. [Description] comprises the constituents of the phenomena as well as the exploration of their relations to and connections with adjacent phenomena" (Spiegelberg 1971, 670).

The Workshop Plan

Stage One: Preparation

Before the first workshop, recruited participants were provided with instructions on how to perform *attentional* and *phenomenological reductions* during performance. I made the document's title playful in order to mitigate the serious sounding directives of the procedure. The steps were presented in point form as follows, and discussed with participants prior to the performance. I will provide a commentary below each point.

Top Tips for a Phenomenological and Attentional Reduction during Performance

- | |
|---|
| <p>1) Enter the performance with 'little to no frame of expectation' about what is to be performed. Like a child, expose your sensing receptive self to the world of phenomena as it shows itself. DO NOT READ THE PROGRAMME</p> |
|---|

I make use of Gay McAuley's suggestion for how to approach a performance when conducting semiotic analysis: with 'little to no frame of expectation'. As a student and teacher of McAuley's method, I found this to be very close to practising a style of phenomenological reduction: bracketing beforehand any expectations one may have of the performance which may lead too quickly to interpretation, or close down understanding. The methods for a semiotic and phenomenological analysis are not that dissimilar, but their analyses aim at different things. Semiotics of performance wants to construct a contingent thread of interpretation from the material and narrative aspects of the production in order to arrive at some meaning(s); phenomenology wants to get back to the things themselves: their invariant essential relations and structures.¹²⁵

Bidding the participant to view the performance like a child is intended to help establish an innocent, open, and presuppositionless attitude. Children represent the capacity for this openness and naivety that a practice of non-mystical "intuiting" requests. Spiegelberg notes:

[t]here is little that the beginning phenomenologist can be given by way of precise instructions beyond such metaphoric phrases as "opening his eyes," "keeping them open," "not getting blinded," "looking and listening," etc (Spiegelberg 1965, 660).

¹²⁵ See McAuley (2001, 5-19) and McAuley (1998).

These “Top Tips” are rhetorical, insofar as they attempt to persuade participants in letting go and adopting a new attitude toward phenomena in a world that they know very well: the world of performance. Thus it was necessary to interweave readily understood concepts, or well-known phrases, with phenomenological language that was new to most participants. Reading the information, then taking it into practice, quickly synthesised our learning and theoretical understanding of the main principles of phenomenology.

I instructed the participants to not read the programme. Often the Director’s Notes explain the meaning and purpose of the performance. I did not want participants to foreground any story or meaning expressed in the programme in their descriptions. However, any meanings emerging from their experience of the performance and communicated in the writing were not entirely disregarded, but bracketed to be elaborated upon in the second and third writing tasks.

2) Begin to bracket out thoughts which relate to any kind of evaluative judgment such as prejudicial likes and dislikes, judgments of whether the performance is failing or going well, aesthetic appreciation and disappointment. Avoid technical/dramaturgical assessments that will lead you down the path of criticism.

I used a very simple analogy of an isometric muscle contraction to explain the practice of bracketing to participants. This image and sensation was very helpful in describing the use of reduction from the moment of performance through to the writing stages A, B and C, and communicating how overtime this practice can shape the contours of a phenomenological seeing in their development as phenomenologists. I wrote:

[i]t's like squeezing a muscle as tight as you can (try it!), then releasing it (drop it!). The muscle still retains an echo of the initial action, its effect a dissipating sensation, inscribed now in memory, still informing. Over time, and if done enough, there will be an inevitable shaping of that muscle from this isometric approach.

For all participants, Tip 2 was an important point to stress. Each possessed a high degree of knowledge and experience in many aspects of performance as practitioners or academics. Their critical minds were sharp and quick to know what they found agreeable or disagreeable. The phenomenological reduction was a challenge, entailing a whole new attitude to the receptivity of performance. Some felt more comfortable than others with this activity. Most participants concurred that they found something new, or focused upon aspects that they would not usually. In some cases, a participant overcame their initial dislike of something when the writing and discussion began. The critical mind did seep in on occasion, but there was incredible vigilance in the activity of bracketing. Participants who had the opportunity to do it more than once found it easier as their bracketing 'muscle' strengthened.

In retrospect, practising with informed participants in a performance context demonstrated the true efficacy of phenomenological bracketing. It is logical that if there were few presuppositions or judgments to bracket, then it would matter less to practise the reductions.

3) Make quiet the analytic mind. Allow such thoughts to enter momentarily, pushing them aside with an active turn of regard back to those objects and their relations within your field of embodied perception.

It was important to stress the embodied nature of perception in the practice of phenomenology. Within the tradition of group phenomenology there is little precedence of the body foregrounded in the reflective awareness of the cognitive and emotional aspects of a perceiving constituting subject. This does not exclude the possibility that phenomenology group practices are taking embodiment as a critical aspect of description; but I have not been privy to such practices. As I have mentioned earlier, in phenomenology more generally, Merleau-Ponty is responsible for thematising the body in the motility of perception, as is Edith Stein in her unification of lived body sensations with a pure intending consciousness in her treatise on empathy in 1916. But practical phenomenologists tend to sit around looking at objects or discussing phenomena without reflecting on the embodiment of their practising: constituting the constituted as it appears to them. This makes sense, insofar as, the event of phenomena may be in the past or only given hypothetically, in that, it belongs to someone else's experience or is fictional. Under these conditions we examine phenomena that are not directly experienced first-hand with our bodies. What is striking about conducting phenomenology from within audience on actual performance phenomena is that the objects are being constituted simultaneously with the act of phenomenology itself. In this respect one's embodiment can readily become a theme.

- 4) Try active visualisation techniques to shelve/suspend thinking and ideas that should be bracketed. Always come back to the body, how the feet feel on the floor, the weight and contact of the body on the seat.**

I provided participants with a line-drawing of a person putting books on a shelf to suggest a simple visual to reimagine during the process of bracketing. Each critical, evaluative and interpretive thought that coloured the experience could be placed on a shelf, like books, and given some significance to attend to in later discussions or worked into their later writing tasks. First, I wanted to give the impression that the procedure was possible, and not as radical as the methodological doubt of Descartes' 'res cogitans' and Husserl's establishment of a 'pure ego'. I was aware of the concerns with such intellectual procedures. My participants were rightly suspicious of selectively suspending thoughts in a method claiming acute descriptions of their experiences: are we not undermining the depth and truth of experience if we attempt to muffle aspects of it? I wanted to stress the bracketing procedure as a simple, momentary movement that was possible in practice. The reduction is an approximating task that can be done with no absolute certainty. Husserl was well aware of this.¹²⁶ Second, the books on shelves as a metaphor for suspended thoughts provided a positive valuation, rather than a deliberation about what thoughts were right or wrong. The shelving picture represents a sorting and separating activity. It was important to insist that the phenomenological reduction practised in this context was not an abrogation of thoughts or thinking. The reduction for Husserl was to clear the path toward a pure field of consciousness: the territory of a pure ego standing behind or within consciousness. Like Descartes, his suggestion was to suspend certain dubitable forms of existence and to arrive at something more foundational: something that could not be doubted. My point here is that the use of reductions in this group practice does not require the same radical exclusion as Descartes or Husserl, but it is the intellectual and embodied movement of putting aside critical and evaluative judgments while attending to specific performance phenomena.

¹²⁶ I follow Steven Galt Crowell in his suggestion that the reduction is an approximate "task":

[t]he idea of a presuppositionless, radically grounded science is thus implied as a *task*, one that can be taken up explicitly, motivated by the idea of ultimate scientific responsibility...nothing taken for granted on the predicative or pre-predicative level can function as an unquestioned ground of knowledge; instead, only the scientific *process* of grounding has "timeless" significance and validity (Crowell 1999, 47).

- 5) Open all your senses toward the performance, the audience around you, the theatre/performance space and your own embodied consciousness. Use your breath to reorient yourself when focus on performing the reductions becomes obsessive. Try not to think about what you are going to write. Allow yourself to be completely immersed, paying attention to where your attention is. If you start to feel overwhelmed, drop the reductions for a few minutes, TAKE A BREATH, take another one and attend to the performance as you normally would. Resume when you feel comfortable again.**

The breath exercises were an important bodily anchor for participants when the processes of phenomenology overwhelmed them. Coming back to the breath reengaged any wandering attentions from the practice of reductions or the performance more generally. One participant observed her breath several times and commented that it would have been impossible to activate the method if this bodily-based anchor had not been suggested.

From my own experiences of applying this method, the effort of a phenomenological and attentional reduction can be exhausting, sometimes causing mental confusion and a total inability to experience the performance in anyway. However with these simple devices—a mental image of putting books on shelves, coming back to the breath, sensing posture, and making bodily contact with the chair and floor—I could reengage with the procedure more easily. The more performances I attended, the less I ‘dropped out’ of experiencing the performance as a consequence of anxiety. In one participant’s account they described a moment of ‘dropping in’ and a moment of ‘dropping out’ of watching. They were acutely attentive and reflective about their experiencing of conducting the phenomenology. They wrote:

[s]oon the audience settles and my attention is drawn in. Until that point I’m not really engaged. I can see the performance has been going on, but for me it has not started. But I settled in tune with my gaze...I find myself reaching to this [sic]—I’ve seen it before. But I stop myself from this judgment & referencing—or try to. It has disconnected me from the experience [P1, G].

- 6) **Tonight’s attentional focus will be directed toward: live bodies, technological media: audio-visual material (a screen presence), music/sound, lights, stage, props, other audience members, auditorium, where you are in consciousness (your memories, imaginings, anticipations) and how you feel. Pay particular attention to the relationships and connections between these.**

For a discussion of selected phenomena, please see explanation for Tip 7.

- 7) **Most of all ENJOY! There is no right or wrong answer. It is just a process that takes a long time to feel comfortable in doing.**

Conducting analysis during a performance may appear to dilute the joy of what is intended to be an enjoyable experience. I wanted to relax participants as much as possible in their first attempt at practising phenomenology. Concerns were raised as to whether they were approaching the method correctly. I tried to mollify these fears with assurances that whatever writing we ended up with, my purpose was not to ascertain an indubitable truth through the ‘perfect’ application of a method. The tips were to guide an approach with optimal outcomes, but the expectation was never that each stage would be conducted flawlessly. At this early stage of collecting participants’ written experiences, I was not concerned about what aspects of the text were relevant or irrelevant. My final-stage textual analysis and transcription of discussion would sort through these without exposing participants in any negative way. Comfort and encouragement were key approaches to guiding this style of experiencing. The group discussion and reading of each other’s writings aloud proved invaluable to the shared development of techniques. I am indebted to my participants for sharpening my skills in both teaching and conducting phenomenology. The two writing tasks were designed for a more analytic progression (discussed below), but ‘Task 1’ often functioned formatively as a practice for participants who felt self-conscious or unhappy with their writing from the first round. By the third workshop I became aware that I was undertaking analysis too early in the process and expecting more from participants than was reasonable. Despite these earlier issues, the discussions of the performance and writings across all workshops and pilots equally provided potent leading clues for my final analysis undertaken in Chapter 7.

In the first workshop, Group A followed all seven tips. By the second performance I made amendments to point (6), and added point (7) and (8) for further clarification.

6) Tonight's attentional focus will be generally directed toward: live bodies, technological media: audio-visual material (i.e. projections), music/sound, lights, stage, props, other audience members, auditorium, where you are in consciousness (your memories, imaginings, anticipations) and how you feel.

7) Tonight's attentional focus will be specifically directed toward: the relationship between the LIVE and MEDIATISED elements. For example: the live dancing performer, their screen presence, or other AV sound/image included within the composition.

I found it necessary to make the distinction between a more general attention toward the entire performance, and a specific attention toward the phenomena under investigation. After the first workshop, I realised that the relationship between the live performer and the technological media needed to be highlighted as it became confusing and too wide an attentional focus for participants to take in everything. But, I also did not want participants to ignore other elements of the mise-en-scène or performance space, such as the auditorium and other audience members. I found drawing this distinction clarified the attentional procedure, and the writings became more directed towards the relationship as the research intended. By the second pilot workshop, more direction was possible due to the fact that I had collaborated in its design to set the conditions for the phenomenological work. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

8) Attempt to pay attention to when, where and how your attention shifts between the live and mediated elements. Be open to the 'structure of your attentional focus' without analysing (less a why) or thinking of reasons for this movement. For example: When, where and how do I switch my attentions from the live dancer to the mediated element? Am I open to both?

The addition of tip no. 8 demonstrates how the design of the method became more refined as the workshops took place. I felt more confident to seek specific relations and ask participants to pay attention to them. The switch in attention between bodies and the media addresses the root of the relationship. To direct attention 'there' and to describe 'when' it occurred, 'where' it occurred and 'how', without asking why, I would be closer to getting at the essential structure of this relationship through the variance of experiences. Interestingly, I was beginning to find a preparatory method for undertaking textual analysis through the interface of the experience. I was initially concerned that the method for textual analysis would be introduced and imposed from the outside: an ancillary method that might compromise the intuiting and descriptive phases of the method where the experience was more immediate and less mediated. There is more than one way to analyse the descriptive work of phenomenology.

Stage Two: Attending

For the first performance, participants were asked to convene in the foyer at least 15 minutes before it began to discuss any concerns with the first stage of the method. As stated already, they were asked to not read program notes but also to avoid any review-based material on the event in order to minimise contaminating the process with preconceived meanings and already formed external judgments and criticisms from reviewers. Immediately following the performance, they were driven to the workshop for the writing session. Participants were asked to avoid discussing the performance with each other or any other audience members whom they might bump into in the foyer—an inevitable encounter given the contemporary dance and performance community within Sydney is small and familiar.¹²⁷

Stage Three: The Writing Workshop

The Revivification of Attendance: addressing the problem of immediacy

On arrival at the workshop venue, participants were asked to lie down or sit with their eyes closed. I conducted a short, spoken induction to help them focus their attention and memory back to the performance attended. The inductive technique revives the past performance event in a visual and embodied manner. I used simple descriptions to walk the participants into the auditorium and to encourage their memories of the event taking place only an hour or so earlier. I call this mnemonic technique the “Revivification of Attendance”. Its purpose is two-fold: firstly, to address the *problem of immediacy*; and secondly, to reinforce the method of bracketing while enabling the reflective writing of experiences. Phenomenological description presents a temporal gap between direct experience, what Gertrude Stein calls the *primordial* experience, and the experience of remembering the originary experience: the *non-primordial* content of that experience (Stein 1989, 7-9). Given the context of phenomenologising performance phenomena, there is by necessity a temporal gap or problem of immediacy in the practice of description.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ All participants showed excellent restraint until the writing tasks were completed some hours later. One participant was bursting to discuss what they liked and didn't like about the performance, but demonstrated excellent bracketing skills by avoiding such evaluations in the writing task.

¹²⁸ Stein describes a difference between the present “I” experiencing the past “I” of the original experience. It involves a representational “I” remembering as its primordial experience an “I” who is no longer a body there, but a body here, now remembering:

I did not want participants to write during any of the performances, not even during the third workshop where conditions were supportive of such impositions. Besides the ethical problem of impolitely interrupting the performer-audience relation with a row of bobbing heads and scratching pens, I did not want to break the unity of the participants' experience any further with the added distraction of writing. The phenomenological reduction and attentional focus were complicated enough procedures to incorporate. As a result it became necessary to deal with the problem of immediacy during the workshops.

That the writing of experience is an act of memory representing the "I" of a former experience, the mnemonic tool (aid to memory) needs to also revivify the bodily experience of the event. Bodily memory does not necessarily accompany visual memories of an activity or event. Naturally this is because the body is no longer in the past; it can only concretely and primordially be present in one place at one time; thus in our practice of phenomenology, the body localises itself as a body remembering. However, the body and its senses can revivify the contents of a past event more readily than actively retracing it from mental pictures alone—like watching oneself in a movie, or viewing a scene like a camera audiencing one's own experience. The meditation style induction was intended to visually and kinesthetically orient the participants' memory to the former shared context. We were all there together in the same place at the same time with a diverse set of experiences and attentions. The workshop's purpose was to ascertain these overlapping experiences in their rich variance, and so required a style of guidance that could connect participants more closely with their embodied memories. By the writing stage, not more than two hours out from the performance, we all suffered from varying degrees of forgetfulness. By first relaxing participants with a breath-based body scan, I asked them to remember the moment they walked into the auditorium, took their seats, waited for the performance to start, the lights going down and the opening stage image. Wherever participants chose to start writing was up to them, I made no restrictions. Describing this starting image was a helpful access point. Most of the written accounts began with an experience of the opening image and digressed from there. Some accounts were accurately chronological, varying in detail on select moments.

The second purpose of the embodied induction was to reinforce the bracketing process. That the attentional focus was successfully maintained during the performance was

[t]he memory of a joy is primordial as a representational act now being carried out, though its content of joy is non-primordial... not bodily there (Stein 1989, 8).

no assurance to counteracting the processes of evaluation and pre-edited writing post-performance. I needed to ensure that in the anticipation of writing, participants did not lose this intuitive openness to describing phenomena. From my own experiences, I often formulate beforehand what I want to write, how the text might be structured, and what needs to be included. It was necessary to discourage such anticipatory concerns, and to maintain the bracketing of presuppositions, judgments, evaluations and premature interpretation. The transition from the embodied induction to writing was made quickly. Before participants opened their eyes, I instructed them to do nothing else but to get up, collect their writing material, find a comfortable space in the room, and to write until I told them to stop.

The induction for the revivification of attendance from the first workshop was given such positive feedback that I made two further additions to the method in the second and third workshops. I introduced a similar style of induction prior to attending the performance. We all congregated earlier in the workshop space and ran through the breath-based body scan. Rather than revivifying an experience that had not yet occurred, I used this technique to hone their bracketing and attentional focus. I worked with a somatic exercise that switches attention between external noises furthest away, sequentially hearing back to those sounds closest to us (internal).¹²⁹ The preparatory induction reiterated steps 1-7 for attending the performance in a more embodied way. Participants returning to the project were favourably responsive, commenting that the process proved a lot easier with this preparatory embodied induction. Phenomenology is a very specific kind of attitude, and requires time to reorient our entire being from its everyday compartments. Approaching the reductions by engaging the body in unison with the activity of an intellectual reduction in a warm-up scenario proved invaluable.

The second change was to include the possibility of moving, sounding, talking and drawing during the post-performance induction. Rather than revivify these embodied memories as a locked-in, motionless body, I gave participants the opportunity to respond through one of these modes. Some chose to move a little, but most became very relaxed in their supine positions. I decided that by relaxing the mode of response, participants might connect with their memory of the experience more easily if given the opportunity to express this more freely. I did not see this as an alternative to writing experiences. Such expressive modes would require further representation with verbal or written language, hence creating

¹²⁹ I am indebted to Sydney-based improviser and performer Tony Osborne for teaching me this exercise. Osborne prepares his students with a range of somatic exercises up to an hour before improvisational tasks and performance practice.

more distance from the ordinary experience. I intended the elaborated responses to increase the mnemonic potency of the induction.

Writing Task A

Participants were provided with their own exercise book to keep and return to me once the session was completed. In this book they were asked to write their first account under a time limit of 30 minutes. Participants were asked to describe their experience of the performance with respect to the particular attentional relations of the selected phenomena: live corporeal bodies dancing with technological media, whatever the output (visual and/or sonic, grid lines, projections, and/or televisual representations). They were asked to pull back from any analysis or reasoning informed by their background knowledge systems, and to avoid evaluative language that approved or disapproved of the performance. Participants were reminded that it was not a critical review or response, and to remain open to their intuiting of the event. Prior to the performance I provided the following *Directives for Constraints* to participants in their “info pack”, and we read through Writing Task A before commencing the induction.

Top Tips for Writing Phenomenological Descriptions

Directives for constraints within the writing phase: Writing Task A (30 minutes)

1. In order to start you might want to run through events and happenings in chronological order. It may be the opening visual scene that revivifies your memory. Re-construct your experience in any format, style you like as long as the parameters below are observed. Understand that it is not a regurgitation of events, or an opportunity to retell the narrative.
2. Pull back from all conceptual analysis where description of the performance is abandoned for 'higher order theoretical systems' such as critical, political, and/or aesthetic theories. Such systems may later carry your writing into an informed account.
3. Pull back from evaluative language particularly superlatives such as: it was wonderful..., it was interesting..., or, it was a work of genius. Avoid the opposite: it was awful, dull, immature work e.t.c.
4. Avoid too quick an interpretation of the phenomena and their relationships, i.e. making sense, significations or establishing meaning from the production. This comes in stages after the initial writing task.
5. Avoid judgments of taste that lead to subjectivist, groundless criticism i.e. what you 'like' or 'don't like'. This is a difficult one to bracket. PRACTICE YOUR SHELIVING/SUSPENSION TECHNIQUES!
6. Remember where your attentions were directed (hopefully in line with selected phenomena).
7. Consider your embodied thoughts surrounding these perceptions: memories, imaginings, anticipations (projected images, ideas) and feeling states: emotive (without being ethical), sensorial: visceral and sense responses.
8. AVOID EDITING LANGUAGE: throw out punctuation, connectives (however, but, furthermore, although). Try and avoid necessary causal language: x causes y or y because of x. Affective reasons are ok: I felt, imagined this after this happened.

Figure 2: Original Document from first Workshop

Swapping Accounts: Reading and Discussion

On completion of Writing Task A, each participant swapped his or her account with another. One person suggested that each read aloud their account to the group. This proved to be very beneficial, provoking a range of responses directly from the writings. The purpose of the discussion was to have the group ask questions, clarify what was said, and consider for themselves any 'congruencies' and/or 'dissonances' between accounts describing the same event. There was to be no argumentation as to whether one person's account was more

accurate or inaccurate than another's, or whether a particular interpretation could lead to the overall meaning of the performance. I wrote:

Allow yourself to be influenced, open to the other person's style. You may also be reminded of an event in the performance to write more about. The other person's questions may encourage you to elaborate, and expand upon your previous description.

Writing Task B

Here, I asked participants to continue adhering to points 1 through 8 from writing task A and to remain mindful of the discussion while writing a second account of the same performance. I suggested that they might like to add to the account, deepen their description, write of new experiences prompted from someone else's descriptions, or start again.

The difference with this task was to allow one word, term, statement, idea, question or description to 'spring forth' from the writing (as they wrote), or what had been revealed in the previous task and discussion process. By initially working with the metaphor of putting on the shelf or 'suspending' ideas that might close down the inquiry too soon, I asked participants to now relax and "take one off the shelf", but only as far as there is one thought or theme considered which tends towards making sense, meaning or signification from the experience. This one thought is considered to be an essential distillation of the experience, and the departure point for bringing their account toward some kind of interpretation. I impressed the inchoate quality that I expected from this writing task, promising development and more polished attendance in Writing Task C.

To demonstrate how to 'take one of the shelf', I included the following example of generative development over the two writing tasks:

In the first pilot workshop of the research project, participant 1 wrote the term 'precision savagery' in both writing tasks. There was no elucidation of what this term exactly meant, but was a repeated linguistic motif suggesting something essential (*eidetic*) or deeper in their experience of the performance.

My initial aim was to have participants develop further writing on a reoccurring theme with no restriction to interpretation. This became a motivation for Writing Task C.

Stage Four: An Informed Written Account

Writing Task C

For this task, I asked participants to take this one aspect revealed as significant from the former two accounts and develop the writing in whichever way they liked. Participants were permitted to relax all previous constraints and develop the writing with their previously suspended knowledge and conceptual systems to produce a more polished account. Their interpretation had the opportunity to deepen associatively beyond the performance. For this task I was interested in the moment where the bracketing ceased and how the writing in its generative movement would develop this one aspect from previous accounts written under imposed constraints. In a sense this task became a reversal of the phenomenology. In relaxing these constraints, I had two questions in mind: does the phenomenological attitude persist to preserve the experience as it was intuited and described while observing the reductions? Or does the reintroduction of our knowledge systems erode the foundational work? If one considers the constructive phase of Descartes' radical doubt after we are left with an indubitable ego (which thinks and so is: *ich bin*) the suspension of all that exists but the thinking ego (and God who never faces this same exclusion) is relaxed and the picture of our surrounding world is rebuilt on the basis of the remaining *cogito*. Our questions for this intellectual process of bracketing are: what is the world like now? Is it the same? Or do we have a different picture of the world as a result of this systematic doubting?

During the development of my research project I started to review dance for Sydney-based performance magazine *RealTime +Onscreen*.¹³⁰ I took this opportunity to practise the method on my own, flexing the phenomenological muscle required for the workshop groups. I found all the stages helpful in attending to the performance with an openness that I would not usually have. Writing a critical review demands a different approach to the attentional relations specified in the project; rather than focusing upon select phenomena and their relations, the entire performance is a foregrounded feature of phenomenological attention. Moreover, the writing itself is required to move beyond description into a more critical and polished account of the experience. Critically developing writing from description to evaluation by and large interprets the meaning of performance, along with the value of the performers and the production; and the contextual aspects of the artwork in its historical and

¹³⁰ Access to the online version of this magazine is at: <http://www.realtimearts.net/>.

contemporary milieu. Review writing using phenomenological method motivated my third writing task C.¹³¹

Task C was to be a take-home exercise due to time constraints during the workshop. But for several reasons it never worked as a final stage in the research. Besides the impossibility of asking participants to do more work outside of the sessions, I realised by the third workshop that any more writing from participants caused my analysis to move away from ascertaining the essential structure and relations of phenomena, and reach towards an interpretive analysis of the meaning context of the performance. I concluded that rather than place the onus of interpretation upon participants during the workshops, the fourth stage of analysis would need to be the *eidetic* examination of all the texts taken together once the workshops were completed. Such a narrative demonstrates how the design of my method developed in close contact with the experiences of its application, and in direct response to an evaluation of its successes and failures.

Reflections on approach to the writing

The language style of descriptions produced by particular constraints on participants' writings demonstrated an unfolding within events, from more passive modes of experience to higher order acts of judgment. This is the result of the method itself. Participants approached each task differently, and their writing styles distinctly reflected the unfolding of these modes within the structure of their thinking. Access points to more passive states of reception were found in participants' more poetic moments, and appeared more readily accessible from the conjunctive point of reception (I saw or imagined x when y grabbed my attention). Active modes of reception were foregrounded in moments where interpretation crept in. Writing task C is a case in point, where the higher acts of judgment may be invited back into the writing. In constructing the *Poetics* framework a primary concern for me was to design a writing approach that was sensitive to the fullness of an experience in its genetic unfolding: a writing method producing a new language that calls up the more passive, background shades of experience, and which foregrounded embodied attention.

In the next chapter, I will discuss the influence of different phenomenological practices on my design process by presenting case studies of performances where I was a research participant, observer, or audience member. This will be closely followed by my final section, *Discovering*, where I undertake an eidetic analysis of the events through an

¹³¹ For a good discussion on modes of review-based writing See Banes (2004).

examination of the written texts of participants. From this analysis, I have, at the very least, made invaluable insights and conceptual clarifications of the essential structural relations between bodies and technological media in a performance context. With a method of *eidetic variation*, the cultural-relativist skirt is lifted in order to reveal the phenomena's "invariant and unchanging structures, irrespective of their layered on cultural senses" (Steinbock 1995, 96).

In his translation of *Husserliana XXIII*, John B. Brough comments on Husserl's struggle with the changing character of phenomenological analysis:

As [Husserl] writes in his 1904/05 lectures, phenomenological analysis has the “peculiarity” that “every step forward yields new points of view from what we have already discovered appears in a new light, so that often enough what we were originally able to take as simple and undivided presents itself as complex and full of distinctions” (Brough 2005, xxxii).¹³²

Over the course of Husserl's life, his phenomenological work on ‘re-presentation’ phenomena yielded a vast amount of writing.¹³³ Husserl's texts demonstrate how his position dramatically shifted over the years in his ongoing determination and reflections on the complex structural relations of such phenomena in consciousness. Identifying phenomenology as a *movement* rather than a philosophical school, Herbert Spiegelberg argued that a “philosophical movement can inspire the sense of philosophy ‘in the making’, thus avoiding the rigidity of a philosophical system, without being anti-systematic, but rather pre-systematic” (Spiegelberg 1983, 296). In discussing the movement and limits of philosophical method, Paul Ricoeur notes that:

[t]he consciousness of the validity of a method is never separable from the consciousness of its limits. It is in order to give full measure to this method, and especially to allow myself to be instructed by it that I will seize hold of it in its movement of expansion, starting with an indisputable core, rather than taking it at its final stage, past a certain critical point where perhaps, it loses its limits (Ricoeur 2007b, 30).

Taking these three positions into consideration, my method for the study of performance phenomena has also been an experience of a non-static, responsive, and expansive framework, which changes shape following its application at each workshop meeting. These changes are due to feedback from the participants' experiences of practising each step of the method (from induction to the written stages); and as a consequence of my ongoing learning

¹³² *Husserliana XXXIII* draws together sketches and lectures of Husserl's work on the phenomena “that fall under the heading of *Vergegenwärtigung*, or ‘re-presentation’” (Brough 2005, xxx). Translation of these particular manuscripts from the Husserlian forms the work *Phantasy, Image Consciousness, and Memory (1898-1925)*.

¹³³ Re-presentation phenomena include memories, expectations, *phantasies*, and image consciousness.

and development as a phenomenologist through my participation in group phenomenology sessions, and as an audience member. Problems identified in executing my method during the workshops have led to slight variations to my initial approach as presented in the previous chapter. I see this as a refinement upon the overall process. As a dissertation concerning itself with developing and presenting an experimental methodology for phenomenological aesthetics in performance studies, thorough explanation, documentation, reflection and evaluation are essential. The design process has been an important aspect of my research. The method shaped itself in relation to the demands of the phenomena and the needs of the participants. Moreover, the preparatory analyses in this chapter provide a number of valuable clues for disclosing the structures and modes of the relational phenomenon found in the final section. The case studies provide a small taxonomy of technological media used in dance performance—particularly those that have had an impact on my method. Rather than presenting a ‘shopping list’ of performance technologies, I describe each in relation to their set-up, use and reception. But before concentrating on the different case studies, I would like to briefly discuss phenomenology as a creative practice.

After my first visit with Steinbock in 2008, along with other discoveries within the literature describing phenomenological methods applied within non-philosophical disciplines, it was apparent that these steps and stages were not strictly causal, but contingent, and so open to manipulation and modification. Media theorist Vilém Flusser defines design as a verb: “‘to concoct something’, ‘to stimulate’, ‘to draft’, ‘to sketch’, ‘to fashion’” (Flusser 1999, 17). My ventures into other styles of phenomenology showed the potential for designing a method for approaching phenomena in more interesting and creative ways, without compromising the rigour required for analysis. The design for the *Poetics* project is iterative in its repeated use. As Spiegelberg points out, phenomenology is a fundamental change in attitude “which [gives] access to an entirely new dimension in the world of everyday experience” (Spiegelberg 1971, 29) The way in which this fundamental change in attitude is taken up can be a creative and experimental process: a process that in and by its very nature describes what is essential about experience—and the experiencing of that experience—from a non pre-ordained perspective. In practising phenomenology we open onto the thing/concept of interest. But *how* we come into contact with the phenomena, or *how* we communicate these experiences and the very structure of our embodied perceiving is an open affair. Communication of these experiences may be verbal or written, visually represented or exchanged through gesture. It is the task of the phenomenologist to develop an equally fluid system of consistent analysis that does not close down the meaningful dimensions of experience, otherwise the task of phenomenology has failed.

Practising phenomenology as an experimental method might, in some regards, be viewed as a form of creative practice. Steven Bindeman acknowledges that phenomenology is the most appropriate philosophical method for the study of human creativity “because its focus is on the immediate, ordinary experience (meaning the experience as it is lived)” (Bindeman 1998, 69). In the field of architecture and design, the word phenomenology is often thought synonymous with “creative spontaneity or with indeterminate feelings associated with sensually stimulating locales” (Wang & Wagner 2007). Don Ihde sees phenomenology and art (music, visual arts, dance) sharing a “common ground” in their commitment to a “realm of the possible” (Ihde 1977, 135-152). Phenomenology is a practice of variation: a sifting through of possibilities, real and imagined, in its pursuit for the essential. Art too is a practice in variation, and an exploration of the possible. Ihde goes so far

as to say that “it is possible to see the practice of the artist as latently phenomenological from the outset” (Ihde 1977, 135-152). Since the practice of phenomenology is thought appropriate for the study of creativity, is used as a method in creative processes (design and architecture), and methodologically shares variation within a realm of possibility with art, what is unique about understanding phenomenology as a creative practice or discipline?

Phenomenology is creative insofar as the pursuit of understanding things in the world (including concepts) employs a range of different approaches and devices to describe the variances of any single or shared experience. What kinds of experiences or objects can we creatively approach with phenomenological practice? For the most part, all given phenomena are open to creative methods. Phenomenology permits us to go beyond the prejudices and disposition of the self to understand a range of things both given and not given in the world. Experiences that go beyond ordinary perceptual fulfillment in their grasping include many found within the aesthetic domain. Technological events in particular evoke experiences not given in the usual mode of presentation. Mediatized experiences within art events have been traditionally understood through a number of critical frameworks, from mid-twentieth century modernist methods of formalism to their rival, postmodernism; the latter has tended to offer only counter-attacks on modernism, rather than a rigorous investigation of the complex embodied experiences involved in these art events (Jones 2006, 8).¹³⁴

The following sections provide documentation on different approaches to group phenomenology that have questioned or altered the method presented in the previous chapter. In acknowledging these experiences, my overall design has become iterative in its structure, and will change in light of my exposure to other approaches as I continue to develop as a phenomenologist in the creative arts. The significance of pointing out the non-static, dynamic character of my method is to demonstrate the malleability and rigorous nature of phenomenology applied within performance studies. It is a style of comportment best suited to moving with and beyond the complexity and limits to our experiential understanding of phenomena.

¹³⁴ Formalism is associated with New York-based Art Critic Clement Greenberg, writing in the 50s and 60s. A Marxist in his political orientation, Greenberg was ideological about separating the five senses in order to “produce isolated sensations abstracted from the bourgeois body [that was] *always* ordained by site” (Jones 2006, 8). Greenberg insisted that experiences of artworks needed to be ocular: “a sense capable of producing the most ‘distance’” from the bourgeois body: a disarming critique of an interfering body of undifferentiated, irrational, and disorderly senses (Jones 2006, 8). Formalism perpetuated the modernist, machinist aesthetic of the body in its fetishisation of sight.

The four case studies in this section include: 1) a description of my engagement in an alternative method for practising phenomenology—Phenomenology of Guilt; 2) my examination of a research project involving live bodies interacting with Second Life technologies and shadow play in experimental ways—A Mixed Reality Project and *Rosi tanz Rosi*; 3) documentation of performances attended by workshop participants, *Our Brief Eternity*, *Glow* and *Erection*; and 4) a description of my final workshop *Transmission Laboratories*, a collaboratively devised work between a media artist, dancer, and me. My purpose for devising a live, mediatised performance as the final workshop was to, firstly, set the appropriate conditions for conducting the phenomenological work with more time and focus; and secondly, to draw specific attention to relations of interaction between the corporeal body, technologies, and audience. Beyond any methodological gains, many insights into the relationship between these forms were made in the design and refinement of the method itself. Documenting these case studies has clarified a unique set of relations that I considered while conducting the phenomenological and attentional reductions in and after the workshops for my *Poetics of Reception* Project.

Case Study #1: The Phenomenology Research Group

Phenomenology of Guilt (session 2)

Date: 2 October 2008, Fall Semester, Southern Illinois University Carbondale

Location: *The Common Ground* Café Carbondale, Southern Illinois

Time: 8.30am – 10.30 am

Group Led by Professor Anthony J. Steinbock

Present: Ben Craig, Christina Gould, Daniel Guentchev, James McKain, Jodie McNeilly, Fabricio Pontin, Nicholas Smaglio, Jessica Soester, Seth Vannatta

The group convenes at a local café outside of the University every other week during session. Professor A. J. Steinbock has organised two meetings to take place during my stay in Carbondale. The present focus of the group is the phenomenology of guilt, a theme which follows previous gatherings on the moral (or interpersonal) emotions: hope, despair, trust, betrayal, repentance and forgiveness.¹³⁵ The Phenomenology Research Group (PRG) emerged in Fall 2002 from a seminar taught by Steinbock. The group was formed in response to a student's question: how do we do phenomenology? This was a significant question because traditionally scholars are engaged with interpreting the works of particular figures within the phenomenological tradition with little investigation of the matters themselves. The meetings began informally in a café with a focus upon moral emotions, and have continued uninterrupted for the past nine years every other week for each consecutive semester. Each year the group inquires into a different emotion. Each year the students and faculty from a diversity of disciplines (philosophy, architecture, engineering, anthropology, communications and performance studies) return. Over the years the Research Group has been comprised of a number of international scholars from several countries, including Slovakia, Bulgaria, China, Iran, Israel, South Korea, South Africa, Brazil, United States, Norway, Australia, France and Canada.

Guilt was taken as the theme for phenomenological investigation in the previous academic year. The results were not as pleasing to Steinbock as they had been with the other moral emotions. Despite each emotion presenting a level of difficulty, Steinbock felt that guilt did not seem to be providing the opportunity for the same level of insight. To me, in the two meetings that I attended, the problem did not seem to be a lack of examples of experiencing guilt (something that pride presented in the 2010/11 group). For a third semester

¹³⁵ Since guilt, the group worked on shame (2009-2010), and pride for the 2010-2011 academic year. In May 2009, the research group formed into the Phenomenology Research Center (2009) located on Campus at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. The Center hosts international scholars from any discipline to undertake independent research in phenomenology within a collaborative environment. www.phenomenologyresearchcenter.org/

on this theme, the structure of guilt was being considered in terms of its temporal dimension: the relationship between an experience of guilt in the present, its retentional past, and toward its futural significance. The model of temporality used to explicate guilt in phenomenological terms was that of Husserl's *genetic* self-temporalising model, a model that revised his more static model presented in the 1905 lectures on internal time consciousness.¹³⁶

Before each meeting, Steinbock sends through the previous session's notes. These notes are very useful as they allowed me to understand how the meetings might proceed. The temporal structure of guilt was worked out "in relation to the simple epistemic character of our temporal experience" (Steinbock 2008). The group focused firstly upon the past, the past as a retention whereby our memory (remembering) of it took place in the present. Accordingly, the retention has no intentional structure to it. "It retains the past as past and allows for a continuity of experience to unfold in a harmonious (concordant or "normal" manner)" (Steinbock 2008).

I was surprised how structured the phenomenological examination was with respect to the temporal explication of themes. Despite my concerns about how to reflect upon my method for the *Poetics Project*, I was delighted that temporality was emphasised. Having read and adopted Husserl's model of internal time consciousness from his earlier lectures for my Honours thesis, I was reasonably familiar with his model of retentions, immediate impressions and protentions as they are worked out as a particular 'temporal style' in this study of the moral emotion, guilt.

The matter of 'reproduction'—as distinct from remembering—was prominent in Steinbock's notes. I wondered how this affected the 'original' or 'new' experience of guilt, when the conditions for that guilt were the same (such as eating chocolate more than once during Lent, and feeling guilty each time in relation to God). I then posed these questions: are the subsequent experiences of guilt, say in the series of guilt related to eating chocolate during Lent, mere reproductions or are they 'fresh' experiences of guilt? And where new experiences of guilt are considered as a 'rupture'—where guilt intervenes in the 'natural' unfolding of events and calls into question what occurred or (in some cases) what may occur—would it be possible to say that they are new experiences of a reproduced kind of guilt? If so, does this suggest that the experiences of guilt following the original guilt experience dissipate or intensify? Steinbock argued that each time we eat chocolate during

¹³⁶ See my earlier chapter "The Phenomenological Ground" for more detail on the methodological shift in Husserl, §2.3.3, pp. 81-98.

Lent they are new experiences of guilt, not derivations, even despite the guilt-event being exactly the same. Each time we eat chocolate and there is an experience of guilt, it is an original guilt that emerges spontaneously, with a new set of intentions associated with the event and feeling guilty. It is not a degraded or intensified guilt; nor is it regret or repentance. Steinbock insists that we must ‘attend to’ these other moral emotions separately. By the second meeting it had been argued (with the help of the group) and noted by Steinbock that “the rupture-quality of guilt is so peculiar to the experience that we can designate it as an essential feature. Accordingly, if the emotional experience fails to have this rupture, then it will not be guilt” (Steinbock 2008).

The major differences between Steinbock’s approach and mine is the type of phenomena under investigation (concepts versus objects); the way in which phenomena are given; and the method used: a reflective discussion-based method as opposed to a post *insitu* textual one. My phenomenological examination is conducted simultaneously with the co-constitution of external objects within ordinary perception in the shared world of performance. Even though there is a temporal lag between the immediacy of the experience and the writing and discussion stages, the phenomena have been co-constituted in a shared experience. Moreover, we attend to a performance that occurs independently in the world for us to bear witness to as audience members. Steinbock’s workshops are focused upon the intersubjective experiences of the moral emotions. We have to make a special case of these emotions through remembering a past experience, thinking of hypothetical examples, and drawing upon examples from history, philosophy, film and literature.¹³⁷ The givenness of any phenomenon is not immediate. We cannot feel guilt without an experience of guilt; moreover, we cannot feel shame in attempting to describe the experience of shame, unless someone is in fact experiencing guilt or shame at the precise time of the session. However it is phenomenologically possible to remember an experience of guilt in order to reflect. Eidetic analysis is immediate in Steinbock’s method. The process of *imaginative variation*—flicking through the various examples to see what remains essential (*invariance*)—happens during the discussion and in between each group session while Steinbock interpretively writes up his notes. These notes are the basis for the next group discussion; thus, a hermeneutical process is involved as these notes between sessions begin to take a more formal shape as a conference paper, article, or chapters for a book.

¹³⁷ Steinbock often referred to examples from literature and film to examine guilt more deeply. Characters from existentialist novelists such as Dostoyevsky, Kafka, and Sartre were favoured.

Interestingly, at one session a member of the study group admitted that he was feeling guilty about missing another lecture to stay with us at the café. The structure of this moment for him was described as “a guilt between two goods”. In his mind, the session and lecture were both goods (McNeilly 2008, 8). At that moment, I wanted the student to describe or write exactly what he was feeling, attending to his bodily movements and sensations associated with the experience. Was there bodily heat, perspiration? An antagonised distraction: looking away with downcast eyes, a feeling of withdrawal in physical posture from the shared discussion? Or was he kinesthetically torn in his paradoxical motivation: moving away while at the same time towards—an embodied twisted torque action, like the wringing of water from a towel? In guilt there is a retreat from constituting an absolute presence to appropriate others in a situation (like in pride).¹³⁸ We move away, rather than towards in our resistance of others. Is guilt, then, the converse of pride in a bodily sense? How does a guilty thought dominate your embodied consciousness? Do you crave other thoughts to avoid these feelings? The bodily experience of guilt was raised as a consideration in the following session. Steinbock asked:

[w]hat does it mean to look guilty? That is, how is guilt expressed in an embodied manner? Does one look at others as if they are accusing? Am I timid, withdrawing in their sight? If I am guilty and don't want to be caught, am I even more perceptually aware of who is looking or might be looking – heightened sensitivity to being seen/accused such that all other looks are implicit accusations? (Steinbock 2008, 4)

Following up on the embodied experience of guilt, Steinbock proposed to me that if I had to choreograph guilt, how would I do it? My immediate response was to describe withdrawn gestures in the torso, a collapse inward through a deep upper chest contraction; and an uncomfortable shirking from others, a shrinking of the front body into the back body, initiated by the heart in a movement of retreat. The eyes' focus would be widened to see all, with the intention of not being seen. On reflection, the movement overall could derive from the score: “to see all, but not be seen”.¹³⁹

¹³⁸ Pride is essentially intersubjective. The self in pride may be bedazzled by its absolute uniqueness, but it never leaves the interpersonal sphere. Pride is a resistance to otherness.

In pride, I am given to myself as if first among others, either “before” others could intervene, or as if their givenness or contribution to meaning were non-integral to my experience or as insignificant (absolutely or relatively) (Steinbock 2011, 1).

¹³⁹ In this context, a score is a set of parameters or constraints that a performer will adhere to in the act of improvising. A score can be quite simple or rather complex. They may be pre-set, or emerge during the act. A score offers a structure, and base anchor point of return in an exercise that is otherwise without limits. It is a

In guilt, one stands accused by another, this other can also be oneself.¹⁴⁰ The formulation of the score could be extended: “to see all, but not be seen by others, including yourself”. This example lends itself to the creative potential of phenomenology, a method for creating scores in the practice of choreography. Moreover, deriving the score from thinking in creative movement terms about an emotion—the body in a hypothetical, representational instance—provides insight into the essential structure of that moral emotion. Rather than gaining such insight into essences from psychological instances, the body is foregrounded as an imaginative variant both in memory and fictitiously.

In the sessions I attended in 2008 on guilt—and many more since on pride and humility (2010-2011)—the use of hypotheticals or possible instances of experiencing these moral emotions have been a predominate aspect of the method for Steinbock. Initially I was confounded with how a phenomenology could proceed if the experiencing of phenomena was not immediate and direct—as was the case with the object-oriented practical phenomenology of Spiegelberg and Casey, and my study of *being-there-with* at an object-event. But I soon realised that an abstracted emotional experience was still representational of an experienced emotion. The most fictional or hypothetical experiences can contribute to instances of imaginative variation within eidetic analysis. As Sokolowski reminds us:

[o]ur imagination takes us beyond the restrictions of actual experience; we contrive examples we have never and could never encounter in the world: “We stand then in a pure fantasy world, so to speak, a world of absolutely pure possibilities” (Sokolowski 1974, 62-3).

Steinbock’s method influenced my *Poetics of Reception Project* in many ways. During his sessions, participants are asked to consider a past, fictional or hypothetical experience in a guided discussion about the particular moral emotion under investigation. They open onto the phenomena with shared enthusiasm, driving the inquiry into previously un-articulated

very useful device for choreographing and for providing a coherent framework during improvisational performances.

¹⁴⁰ To take oneself as another has its philosophical roots in Descartes who inquires into the foundations of subjectivity and existence. In this very inquiry, Descartes posits both an identity of the subject—the ‘I think, I doubt, I am’ (*cogito*), and an identity of the concrete ‘I’, the one that is destroyed with all other physical bodies in his systematic method of doubt. Paul Ricoeur in *Oneself as Another* (1992), suggests that there is a third ‘who’, or other of self, that indeed asks the question of ‘who’ is doing the doubting? The hermeneutics of a self-inquiring of its self and its activities, posits oneself as another. This otherness is of a kind that is constitutive of selfhood.

Oneself as Another suggests from the outset that the selfhood of oneself implies otherness to such an intimate degree that one cannot be thought of without the other (Ricoeur 1992, 3).

territory, while rigorously drawing limits to irrelevant ideas that deviate too far from the matter at hand. The discussion method works with indirect, non-immanent experiences of phenomena. It is a useful method for considering both *concept* and *object* phenomena. A lot of discussion had taken place in my earlier groups, but I had not considered the contents of the discussion as a variant within the technique of *free imaginative variation* until having contact with the Steinbock model. I had understood the process of eidetic analysis to occur only once the workshops were complete. Since allowing the phenomenology to take place in the group discussions between the Writing Tasks, I purchased high-quality recording equipment for the group meetings.

Steinbock's work also provided clues for how to proceed with the textual analysis. It became clear that the final stages of analysis should not be undertaken prematurely, or by the participants themselves (as initially attempted with Writing Task C). I came to understand the value of my participants' written texts as primary sources and/or raw data for ongoing interpretive analysis. It was clear that as instances of imaginative variation these texts would be a valuable resource for examining questions beyond the structural understanding of the relationship between bodies and technologies, just as the examples of shame from the research group continue to be a resource for Steinbock in his philosophical elaborations on differing topics (i.e. Shame and Agamben; Shame and erotic perception in Merleau-Ponty).

Case Study #2: Mixed Reality Performance as Research

Project 1: *A Dance and Virtual World: mixed reality performance*

Date: January 2009

Location: Critical Path, Sydney, Australia

Producer/choreographer/filmmakers: Physical TV (Richard Allen & Karen Pearlman)

Collaborators: Guy Hayes (MUVEDesign)

Following completion of my first two workshops with Group A, I observed Physical TV Company's research project *A Dance and Virtual World: mixed reality performance* as part of Critical Path's 2009 Responsive Program. I was particularly interested in the collaboration between Physical TV and Gary Hayes of [MUVEDesign](#) in their development of an immersive and interactive adaptation of Physical TV's feature dance film *Thursday's Fictions* (2007) in *Second Life*.¹⁴¹ I arrived halfway through the project's two-week residency. By this stage, the dancers were working through sixty different avatar representations designed by Gary using pre-choreographed and improvised movements.¹⁴² The dancers were spatially composed in direct relationship to the prefigured moving avatars projected onto a large single screen in the background. Directed by Richard with pre-choreographed phrases, the dancers openly interacted with each other and the moving avatars. All this was filmed from a fixed tripod. The interactions between the dancers and avatars were of primary importance to Gary who would eventually map the dancers' physical responses and creations onto the avatars for more interesting movement in *Second Life*. Screened in one-minute loops, the movement of the avatars was originally appropriated from figures found in other realities in *Second Life*. The movement of avatars is generally programmed in one of two ways: either through motion capture techniques, where the movement of a human body is mapped directly onto the avatar, giving the avatar a much smoother and fluid facility for moving; or by working algorithmically to move limbs from point to point, which instead

¹⁴¹ For more on Physical TV Company and their projects see: http://www.physicaltv.com.au/HomePageThePhysicalTvCompanyRichardJamesAllenAndKarenPearlman_491_1071_3_0.html. *Second Life* (SL) is an online virtual community of gamers who live an expanded existence by taking on an avatar identity different to their First Life (one's everyday corporeal reality). *Second Life* provides an alternate space of communication and interaction within a mediated environment, one that nearly mirrors the real world in almost every way (Johnson 2010, xii). For a phenomenological study of embodiment and the intentional structure of the *Second Life* world, see Veerapen (2009, 105-114).

¹⁴² An avatar is a "graphical stand-in for the human body within virtual worlds" (Dixon in Carver & Beardon 2004, 25). The term derives from the Sanskrit *Avatara*, which is a mythical being or deity that has been sent down to the material world. It is another form of digital doubling occurring usually in-world within *Second Life*. Avatars can also be found outside of *Second Life*, often projected in 2-dimensions, or represented as newly created virtual identities or digital doubles of well-known figures.

promotes a more jerky and angular movement quality.¹⁴³ By filming the dancers, the mixed reality project was focused upon motion capture techniques to eventually animate the prefigured avatars with more fluid movement possibilities for visitors assuming an avatar identity in Second Life.

The pre-choreographed phrases were built upon the qualities, shapes, motion and feel of the projected avatars; the dancers were arranged in relation to the projected activity on screen, and what emerged spontaneously between their dancing bodies. Richard's choreographic decisions, however, were made through the camera's viewfinder.¹⁴⁴ His overall intention for the final reception of this relation was mediated. I had the opportunity to switch between observing 'unaided' the live perspective of the dancers in front of the screen, and observing their movements 'aided' through the viewfinder. The frame of the viewfinder instructed Richard to compose how, where and when the dancers moved. The dancers also improvised their movements at times, either by cutting up phrases, repeating a particular motif or generating new material. The more improvised the scene, the more interactive and connected the dancers appeared to be with the avatars. Some of the fragments presented quite elaborate virtual environments with unusual scenes, mytho-poetic in their landscape and choice of avatar. Some of the avatars were 'warlord'-like characters, morphing from an unidentifiable moving mass to a menacing warrior. Others were tall, thin, busty women floating within a black box. The architecture was not rectilinear in the more rendered spaces. The avatars in all environments tended to float and spin on any plane, suddenly flying out of the frame in a horizontal direction. Their bodies rubbed back and forth in small arcs as though they were desktop objects being manipulated externally through a mouse interface. Physical TV's Second Life project allowed me to consider more deeply other possible relations between corporeal bodies and mediated representations in contexts involving dance and on-line technologies. As has been noted, the previous two performances attended by Group A brought to the fore a lack of clarity on my behalf, I had not pointed out the

¹⁴³ Motion Capture "involves measuring an object's position and orientation in physical space, then recording that information in a computer-usable form. Objects of interest include human and non-human bodies, facial expressions, camera or light positions, and other elements in a scene" (Dyer, Martin and Zulauf 1999). On the dancing body, points may be placed on the joints or other parts of the body that are then tracked by a camera or wireless sensory system (as with Mark Coniglio's MidiDancer) and translated into digital signals and transmitted to a computer for interpreting. Through multi-mediatic devices, the output may be visual (projections), tactile (projections on the skin) or sonic (audio). See Broadhurst (2007, 99-130).

¹⁴⁴ Richard choreographed from the tiny frame of the camera's viewfinder, rather than from a field monitor. Once the rushes are digitised for editing, the true frame of the shot is different to that which is observed through the viewfinder. What looks to be out of frame on the viewfinder often will be in shot once digitised, and vice versa depending on the camera. The only way to avoid this (given cameras and their aspect ratios are different) is to know the precise distances that a body or object needs to be in relation to the perimeter of the frame.

relations that participants would selectively be attentive to. I had generically picked out live elements such as bodies, set, costumes, props; and for the mediated elements: sound, lighting (old media), projected images or representations on two-dimensional screens including scrim fabric, a range of surfaces, and monitors. Participants were asked to simply consider these in isolation and/or in relationship. Since then, I have identified more relations to consider during the workshops following my attendance as a non-analyst audience member to live, mediated performance, dancing in research projects prototyping movement initiated interactive systems, and observing case studies like the mixed reality research project where the technology is made transparent from concept to construction.¹⁴⁵

In its presentation, the Physical TV research project did not offer suitable conditions for implementing my poetics method because of its stop-start rehearsal quality. Richard and Karen's aim was to "explore the ideas, aesthetics and narrative potential of the meeting of live and virtual dancers" (Allen and Pearlman 2008, personal communication). It was impossible to conduct 'group phenomenology' under such conditions; but I was still able to reflect upon some of the attentional relations for the next *Poetics of Reception* workshop.

Without undertaking any phenomenological work, my first impressions of what I experienced between the dancers corporeally in three dimensions and their mediated images (streamed in real-time, thus live) were astoundingly different. These differences will be

¹⁴⁵ In 2008, I was a participant for interactive designer Lian Loke's PhD research, which considered movement scenarios within immersive systems.

The study explored ways of inventing and choreographing movement for use in the design of motion-sensing technologies. The results of the studies were examined to identify an emerging set of methods and tools to enable designers to work with movement and felt experience in the context of movement-based, interactive technologies (Loke and Robertson 2010, 1).

I also participated in New Zealand based choreographer and academic Carol Brown's *SeaUnsea* project hosted by Critical Path in 2008. The project is described as:

[a] real-time interactive performance and installation in a constantly evolving virtual sea. Set under the wave-like ceiling of the Siobhan Davies Studio, the movements of audience and performers impact on the environment becoming entangled in a synthetic seascape. Captured within these fleeting forms the performers play and explore, attracting, repulsing and entwining their actions within the evolving patterns of a swirling hypnotic sea. The event runs in cycles during which time visitors are invited to 'play' in the installation, watch the performance, then once again inhabit the space (<http://www.carolbrowndances.com/archive.php>).

I was fortunate to work with both Brown and programmer/architect Mette Ramsgard-Thomsen in this system, which premiered in 2006. I was able to be involved in their conceptual, movement and programming processes, performing to a small audience in an end of workshop presentation. The following text is my documentation of how the system worked. I elaborate more upon these experiences in my paper "Bodily-schemata and Sartre's I and me":

My movements recorded by an infra-red camera were drawn in realtime as abstract visual representations by virtual agents within the specifically designed software. These agents were either attracted or repelled by light and dark. In my case, the agents were coded to be attracted to dark. Dressed all in black, except for my hands, feet and face, these agents attracted to my live recorded image were manipulated through predetermined algorithmic scripts to draw the pathway of my movements as lines dynamically folding and unfolding in geometric origami like patterns. Earlier I had folded paper representations as movement stimulus for working with the shape of this visualization (McNeilly 2011, 15-16).

elaborated upon over the next paragraphs. When the live, three-dimensional bodies were dancing in front of the large screen, I found that the projected avatars lacked prominent form in this relationship; they appeared as vague, floating forms not capturing my attention like the live, fleshly bodies dancing in close proximity to me. The dancers appeared awkward and disconnected in their interactions with the avatar projections, which were spectral images haunting the background like moving wallpaper. There was little spatial or temporal coherency between bodies or the screen representations. At first I was confused, and then convinced there was a major problem with this arrangement. However, when observing this same movement sequence against the streamed projections through the camera, the avatars came to life. More visibly and viscerally prominent, the avatars now shared the space with the dancers. The timings, speed and rhythms between the live bodies felt more connected and reactive to the images looping on screen. Even though the avatars were not interacting directly with the dancers who were being directed through the lens, my aided reception revealed an entirely different experience to my unaided reception of the dancers moving against a flat screen. The dance possessed a spatio-temporal coherency in its overall interaction.

The Mixed Reality Project revealed two structural relations in receptivity: a $3D + 2D \rightarrow 3D$ relationship and a $3D + 2D \rightarrow 2D$ relationship. There are striking differences to be found in the reception of each given the same combination of a live body interacting with a projected 2D object onto a 2D surface. In the first instance, receptivity is live and three-dimensional and in the second two-dimensional and live with the potential to be temporally manipulated. In my experience of the Mixed Reality Project, reception of the second instance, a live, mediated event seen through the viewfinder or lens, provided a more connected relationship between the corporeal bodies and avatars. The dance between bodies of code and bodies of flesh co-created a more meaningful world in its two-dimensional reception.

The dimensional relations of receptivity between bodies and technologies

It is important to acknowledge the various dimensional distinctions in receptivity before explicating the eidetic structures of bodies and technologies interacting within performance. The same interactions—say, bodies dancing in relationship to screened avatars—can produce many different dimensional relations in receptivity, depending upon the object-event's layers of technological mediation in reception. Experiencing a work in

performance tends towards the end stage of a dramaturgical process.¹⁴⁶ Receptivity as an audience member is (arguably) always live—whether we are watching filmed content, or a performer breathing and sweating in their three-dimensions before us. But in investigating the relations between bodies and media, we are required to pay attention towards the complexity of reception of each forms' dimensions.

Without conducting group phenomenology on the Mixed Reality Project, I was still able to identify different dimensional relations in receptivity. As a result, a 'genealogy of reception' from the original moment of interaction can be traced and formulated. For example, if we take the reception of bodies dancing with screened avatars in presentation, we have a 3D and 2D relation in reception.

PRESENTATION = Bodies dancing (live in 3D) + Avatars (prefigured in 2D); RECEPTION = 3D (live, non-mediatised) + 2DD [Computer and Screen] (live, mediatised)¹⁴⁷

If the receptivity shifts, and the performance is seen through the viewfinder (as was my experience of the Mixed Reality performance) the bodies dancing becomes a 2D relation, converting the reception of bodies dancing from 3D→2D, and the avatars into a live, mediatised 2DDD relation. The number of two-dimensional mediations in reception is represented accordingly by the number of 'Ds'. The following may represent this experience:

PRESENTATION = Bodies dancing (live in 2D) + Avatars (prefigured in 2D); RECEPTION = 3D→2D [viewfinder] (live, mediatised) + 2DDD [computer, screen, viewfinder] (live, mediatised)

This Mixed Reality Project was an interesting case insofar as the receptivity of the bodies dancing with avatars were 'live' in both the mediatised and nonmediatised formulation. Looking at the avatars through the viewfinder is a case of 2D liveness in receptivity. The

¹⁴⁶ In his celebrated text *Between Theater and Anthropology*, Richard Schechner recognises that most scholars only pay "attention to the show, not to the whole seven-part sequence of training, workshops, rehearsals, warm-ups, performance, cool down and aftermath" (Schechner 1985a, 16). I too agree that performance involves many stages that should be accounted for in analysis, but have deliberately delimited my study, for the most part, to the end-point of performance. I found this to be an easier access point from which participants could begin their descriptions, and a guarantee that interactions between bodies and technologies would occur. My future research on phenomenology as a method for new dramaturgy will hermeneutically account for all the stages of the performance process, weaving with equal emphasis between the stages of conception, creation and presentation in a non-linear way.

¹⁴⁷ This shorthand representation summarises the experience of different presentations and their reception in terms of screen mediations and dimensions. I believe that when working with an interaction designer in live, mediatised events, such shorthand representations would be useful for communicating these relations. Further abstraction and denotation is possible, but unnecessary to develop here.

prefigured, looped avatars are observed in real-time as the interaction between 3D and 2D occurs. If, for example, I were to view the avatars and dancers on a monitor at a later time (during the editing phase perhaps), whereby the presentation of bodies dancing from origin is a conversion from live bodies in 3D→2DD [viewfinder + pre-recorded], this would produce a non-live reception, as opposed to a live, mediatised reception seen in the earlier formulations, for the dimensional conversion itself is not experienced.

The following represents the string of mediations from the very first instance of possible reception through to the presentation of the edited event viewed on a computer:

PRESENTATION = Bodies Dancing (non-live 2D) + Avatars (non-live 2D); RECEPTION = 3D→2DD [viewfinder, computer] + 2DDDD [computer, screen, viewfinder, computer] (non-live, mediatised)

The string of screen mediations and/or conversions in the dimensionality of reception helps us understand the experience. For example, when the avatars appeared on a computer screen they are 2D. When they are projected onto the flat screen they are 2DD, but while the receptivity continues through the viewfinder they become 2DDD and then played back through the computer monitor, 2DDDD. However, it is important to point out that the experience of this latter relation may also claim liveness in reception. In fact, it could be argued that the receptivity of any object whether corporeal and materially presented three-dimensionally, or mediatised and presented two-dimensionally, *will* always be a ‘live’ experience. But this only holds true if the history of the relationship between the 2D and 3D forms under investigation are *not* taken in their original givenness. What I mean here is that the relation or interaction in their original givenness is not a live experience if we are watching the object-event in any form of playback, such as on a computer screen during the editing phase. Despite viewing this in a live sense—that is, the ‘viewer’ is *always* live corporeally—the presentation in relation to reception has to be taken into account, along with the underlying genealogical string of mediations within receptivity that structures the object-event overall.

During the *POR* workshops, there was never any need to inquire into the origin or genesis of receptive relations beyond the immediate moment of experiencing the interactions in performance. The moment of performance was the absolute source of participants’ descriptions. The question now was: by isolating these receptive relations in terms of their historical givenness, should my analysis reach beyond the audience encounter and investigate how the performance was made? An investigation into the making processes prompted by

moments of performative interaction could lend itself to a dramaturgical process. However, identifying the genesis of receptivity from a performance encounter in a research environment is less difficult than attempting to ascertain these from public performance events.

The Mixed Reality project has influenced my methodology in two ways. First, I was able to effectively engage in a process of imaginative variation by reflecting upon the dimensional relations in presentation and reception during the eventual analysis of texts. The following formulation was derived from these earlier insights from the Mixed Reality Project:

**PRESENTATION = DIMENSIONAL FORMS; RECEPTION = [DIMENSIONAL RECEPTIVITY
Genealogy of Screen Mediations] (AUDIENCE RECEPTION (non)Live/(non)Mediatised)**

Secondly, the project helped me identify dimensional relations informing the devising of interactions between a dancing body and various forms of technology (*leitmotifs* for a digital dramaturgy) in my own performance research project to be discussed later in this chapter (Case Study #4). It also helped establish the performance conditions for phenomenological study. I found that designing sites of interaction for research purposes directs the attentional focus of participants for longer, producing fuller descriptions that are impossible in the fleetingness of public performance. In research contexts where performance is utilised as a mode for its own study (performance as research), directing a spectator's attention to a specific relation does not dilute a bonafide performance experience for performer or audience alike.

To further these insights on the role of dimensionality in reception, the following performative instance contributes additional relations between bodies and non-digital media, and demonstrates through experiential description, the role dimensionality plays in distinguishing forms when both are cases of live reception.

Project 2: *Rosi Tanz Rosi* – SODA/Critical Path Residency Exchange

Choreographer: Susanne Martin (Universität der Künste, Berlin)

Date: February 2009

Location: Critical Path, Sydney, Australia

Collaborator: Margie Medlin, Director Critical Path (lighting designer).

Susanne Martin was an exchange scholar from the SODA (Solo/Dance/Authorship) Masters program at the Universität der Künste, Berlin. She was visiting Critical Path in 2009 to develop her solo work *Rosi Tanz Rosi*. The work was exploring through improvisation the female solo performer, and the role of narrative on the theme of aging in that relation. Martin's moving corporeal body was projected as two shadow silhouettes onto a screen and surrounding stage walls during a live showing of her performance. These projections changed scale depending upon the position of the body in relation to the lighting by Margie Medlin. They gave the impression that the aging Rosi was not alone. Alongside her reminiscing frame of a body that dwells more in the past than in her present skin, we were reminded of how she used to be in the shadow forms of her entire figure projected on the screen and surrounding walls. A latex mask, loosely attached—wrinkled, bloated and masculine—transformed her face. Her tightened lips were non-expressive in the absence of speech. Her nose was an exaggerated escarpment dividing this rugged face, awkwardly scaled to her diminutive body shape. We saw the years, the hardships and wondered: what had happened to Rosi?

The clear outline of the dancer's silhouette extinguished the folds of skin. A youthful portrait stood reflected. As I watched, I waited for the silhouette to take on its own life, to no longer be attached to the three-dimensional figure swinging, clasping her flesh and laying out limbs. The projected image appeared to me as Rosi's former memory, a bodily reminiscence communicated to us through her spoken monologue. I deciphered a temporal disjunction between these younger silhouettes dancing on walls to the real-time presence of Rosi's body. The younger Rosi danced to a different tune across time and surfaces.

My reception of the two dimensional presentations of Rosi created a temporal and spatial separation between the performer and her shadows. There were moments when I perceived the silhouette as an entity unto itself, an entity ontologically distinct in shape, movement, size and character from the performer. How is a separation of such meaningful proportions between the object and its shadow possible? Don Ihde's experimentation with the following example from the teachings of Don Juan assists here.

The old wizard advises Carlos [Castaneda] to go out and look at a tree, and instead of seeing it in the usual way (the natural attitude), he instructs him to look at the shadows, so that eventually, it is the shadows that he sees as primary. The wizard is trying to get Carlos to reverse the dominant and foreground and the recessive and background, so that the ordinary tree/shadow appearance becomes a shadow/tree appearance, a shocking reversal (Ihde 1977, 128).

After the experiment, Ihde contends that the tree within its natural context “shows a different and radically reversed perceptual possibility” (Ihde 1977, 128). This experiment illustrates how the practice of an attentional reduction can affect a *Gestaltian* (figure/ground) reversal in our perceptual attentions. However, it also suggests something significant in respect of my *Rosi* experience, and the “perceptual possibilities” that digital projections and silhouettes can bring to bear on the performer as the object responsible for this two-dimensional form.

The narrative of *Rosi* evoked various stages within the life of the aging dancer. The masked performer reminisced about these former times. The lighting design co-constituted the story with visual incarnations of *Rosi* in two dimensions, figures that were further elaborated by my embodied imaginings. Structural analysis of this dimensional relation from one performative instance highlights the aspect of *spatio-temporal separation*. However, the temporal separation that I have discussed here (the silhouette being the reflected, and reflected upon, younger character) is elaborated through her narrative. What could I say temporally (when the temporal is taken in the phenomenological sense) about this relationship if I were to bracket the narrative—the story of an ageing *Rosi*—from what I experienced? My reception of the performative instance did not involve a phenomenological reduction, and there was no group to share in the examination or discussion of this particular object-event. As a result, it is difficult to bracket the significance of the narrative from the structural aspects to establish *spatio-temporal separation* as an eidetic invariant of the relationship between a three-dimensional body and its projected form. Establishing invariance at this stage could have been possible if I had made further descriptions of the object-event (something I never intended), or had similar instances to reflect upon. Nonetheless, this reflection has provided insight into the essential structure of this particular phenomenon: a three-dimensional body in relationship with its two-dimensional shadow, and by extension, a three-dimensional body in relationship with its digital projection. Both can be conceptually considered cases of the performing object in *supra-extension*.¹⁴⁸ In cases of *supra-extension*, the structural aspect of *spatio-temporal separation* provided a leading clue

¹⁴⁸ See page 118 Chapter 4 for a discussion on *supra-extension*.

to further structural analyses of performative instances described. Indeed, the *Rosi* analysis contributed to the examination of interactions within my *Poetic of Reception* project.

In summary, the dimensional relations of receptivity demonstrate that it is never simply a case of the 'live' being distinct from the 'mediatised', or a collapsed, conflated phenomenon. Each interaction involves complex layered distinctions that underscore meaningful experiences. By questioning back from the instance of performance to the genealogical structure of dimensional mediations we consider the object-event outside of a phenomenological reduction. It must be noted that the relations are not imposed upon the phenomena from outside; they describe what already is.

Case Study # 3: The Poetics of Reception Project

As explained in Chapter 5, *The Poetics of Reception* workshops took place between January 2007 and May 2009. A pilot session comprising two participants (myself included) preceded the first workshop in order to identify problems with communicating and executing the method.

The pilot was significant for refining directives for Writing Tasks A and B, and how to proceed with the textual analysis. This was my first time communicating the method; I was not entirely sure the method would work. It was also my participant's first time practising phenomenology and so the reductions were somewhat difficult to sustain. There were moments of interpretation in the text, but these were not overly developed. It was as though they would become aware of making interpretation, and pulled back to let the description issue forth.

Pilot Workshop#1/Performance #1: *Our Brief Eternity*

Company: The Holy Body Tattoo

Location: Canada

Choreographers: Noam Gagnon and Dana Gringas

Music: Jean-Yves Thériault

Film Director/Editor: William Morrison

DOP: Adam Silwinski

Lighting Design: James Proudfoot

Performers: Susan Elliott, Noam Gagnon, Dana Gringas

Venue: Playhouse, Sydney Opera House

Program: Sydney Festival 2007, *About An Hour*

Season: January 8-12

Performance Date: Monday 8, Jan 2007, 8:30 PM

Type: Four Dancers with moving image projections (*Poetry & Apocalypse*)

The expressed intention of *Our Brief Eternity* was to explore the bodily resilience of humans in their struggle for individual identity when facing immanent erasure in the Age of Information. Four dancers moved with growing intensity against a backdrop of shifting large-scale projections.

As previously mentioned, text from P1's 'Task A' revealed a repeated linguistic motif for describing the movement of the dancers, and the writer ascribed this same motif to the meaning or motivation behind the movement and costume style, constituting what the participant saw as "a new form" of the cultural body [P1, BE_P, 4].

Motif: *precision savagery; savagery in precision*

*I occasionally looked for readings of the movement, which does not come easily to me when it is **precision savagery** more abstract, as I found the early sections [P1,BE_P,2]*

*The donning of boots, what new form of culture they ask will emerge, aggressive, **savagery in precision**, the sensual sweating body [P1,BE_P,4]*

When queried on this repeated motif in Task A, the participant was unaware as to why they had written “precision savagery” and “savagery in precision”. I took this as a potent possibility for transitioning from Task A into Writing Task B. For Task B, I was interested in developing upon one word, term, statement, or theme that had issued forth with some significance from Task A.¹⁴⁹ I saw the term “precision savagery” as pointing toward something essential (*eidetic*) in my participant’s experience of the performance; and thus a motif to be elaborated.

I became excited by the emergence of this motif, which helped me to refine the directives for each Writing Task, A to C. It was clear that phenomenological analysis was operating in the movement from one Task to the next: the hermeneutic nature of the method was being revealed in application.¹⁵⁰ The results of the pilot were methodological. Little was revealed in relation to my project’s main concern: understanding the relationship between bodies and technology in live, mediatised performance. At this stage, I was pleased to establish the basis for refinements, and to acknowledge that it was possible to communicate the method.

From this first pilot, I was quick to realise how phenomenological method operatively suspends judgments of like and dislike in the experience of a performance. Mechanical as the method of constraints seemed in application, it was retrospectively apparent that our thinking was opened by the experience of the performance in a manifold of ways. Our aesthetic experiences are often undermined by judgments of liking or disliking some aspect, which then close down opportunities for the deeper articulation of an experience. On the one hand— if we accept the Kantian line of aesthetic disinterest—the immediate reflex of what strikes us as either ‘ugly’ or ‘beautiful’ parochially determines a certain limit to understanding the

¹⁴⁹ Over the course of the workshops I found that the issuing forth of a word, term, statement or theme occurred at different times for each participants. Often Task A would be a writing warm-up for participants.

¹⁵⁰ See the opening pages to Chapter 7 for a description of the hermeneutical aspects of the analysis.

artwork. On the other hand, an aesthetic approach using phenomenology reunites the fractured tripartite system of artwork, artist, and receptivity, and places greater emphasis on reception for revealing the essential structure of the artwork as it is experienced. The latter mode is a more generous alternative to a ‘Kantian-inspired’ closure, particularly when the elements of performance are foregrounded as phenomena for study. By the writing phases of the pilot it was evident that the method was responsible for a shift in aesthetic understanding. Tacit to mine, and my participant’s understanding, was a strong Kantian calculation of liking or disliking the performance: we both had to admit that we did not like many aspects, suggesting a failure in our bracketing. However, this shifted as we persisted with the method into the writing and discussion stage, exposing aspects of the performance heretofore unnoticed. The method had awakened a new way of seeing.

Workshop#1/Performance #2: *Glow*

Company: Chunky Move

Location: Melbourne, Australia

Choreographer: Gideon Orbazanek

Concept & Interactive System Design: Frieder Weiss

Original Music & Sound Design: Luke Smiles

Performers: Kristy Ayre, Sara Black, Bonnie Paskas

Venue: The Studio, Sydney Opera House

Season: March 21-25 2007

Performance Date: Friday 23 March 2007

Type: Interactive mediated contemporary dance performance

“Beneath the glow of a sophisticated video tracking system, a love organic being mutates in and out of human form into unfamiliar, sensual and grotesque creature states” (Orbazanek 2007).

When I arrived at the Studio, Sydney Opera House, two of my participants (P1 and P2) were waiting for me outside the theatre. Both explained that they felt prepared to conduct the phenomenological and attentional reductions for the first phase of the workshop. I took this as a good sign and hoped that my other two participants were feeling just as confident. I provided them with a system card where I had summarised “6 steps to a Phenomenological & Attentional Reduction” on one side:

1. NO FRAME OF EXPECTATION
2. BRACKETING: EVALUATIVE JUDGMENTS – LIKES AND DISLIKES
3. QUIETEN ANALYTIC MIND. ASSUME ‘ACTIVE TURN OF REGARD’ TOWARD PHENOMENA & THEIR RELATIONS
4. VISUALISATION TECHNIQUES (SUSPEND/ SHELVE)

COME BACK TO YOUR BODY/BREATH

5. TRY & NOT THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO WRITE. DROP REDUCTIONS IF OVERWHELEMED
6. ENJOY – NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWER!

and examples of phenomena to pay attention to during the performance:

Investigation: The relationship between live and mediated forms.

Examples of phenomena:

Bodies	fabrics	lights	screen presence	objects	sound objects
auditorium	digital mediatisation		holographic presence		

P4 called my mobile - unable to find a parking space. There was to be a total lockout from the theatre once the show started. I wondered if my first workshop would be a disaster. I waited until the very last moment, but P4 missed the bell.

Inside the theatre P1 and P2 sit diagonally opposite P3 and me in the upstairs mezzanine level of the theatre space. Audience viewing is in the round looking down from above upon the white rectangular mat. The configuration of seating and our seating choices provide greater difference in perspectives between members of the group, more so than being seated in a row facing the proscenium equidistant from each other. Despite the aerial view, the overhead angles of the performer (front, back or side) differ with each movement. The performer's face is hardly seen in this piece. We are not asked as audience members to experience her facial expressions, as we might be if we were directly opposite her in the round. The movement overall is expansive and extended when the performer is upright. Perpendicular to the vertical movement is the rolling out of the two-dimensional shapes on the square white mat. Small intricate gestures are absent from the choreography. Participants' descriptions substantiate the choreographer's preference or need for larger movement to work with the interactive system. The inextricable relation between sound, performer movement, and visual graphic is captured in the following sample of writing.

All this time the dancer's body contacting the floor, sliding, kneading, pressing limbs and body parts into the floor. At last standing, and a breathy sound tears from her throat. Later the possession takes over. Writhing, shrieking, moaning. Stilled. A brush of one arm and then the other, revealing dark traces of angel wings. The body becomes a brush, tracing inky impressions on the floor. To stand and the inky stains become ectoplasm. A life of their own, they morph and ooze back into her standing body [P1,G,8]

P4 does not make it inside the theatre space. Instead they take the initiative to proceed with the phenomenology by watching the small televisual representation of the performance streamed live in the foyer. P4's viewing was an unexpected addition to the study and offered an intriguing contrast in perspective: the performance mediatised and framed by the televisual, a case of live, mediatisation in receptivity.¹⁵¹ They write:

bzz, no no lock
back thru bzz
red
bzz n buzz off
on in no out
yes red abuzz
thru slow then now it is frame
floor is oblique for frame is as frame, as does lens, framed by wall, eyes lens aim by frame
no to bzz¹⁵²

P4's poetic response describes the noise of the theatre's lock out buzzer. The red refers to the colour of the foyer's carpet. P4 then begins to describe the frames that dominate their reception of the performance: the television, camera lens, wall, and the eye as frame. The floor is "oblique" to this frame. They seem frustrated with the situation, writing "no to bzz".

feet like slow funk of pile
by low ecologies, strata slow, low sit
framed
ass of feet, as just legs now and lower legs
but all is not as present as the one lens

¹⁵¹ P4's difference in perspective and receptivity helps to frame several points of interest in the upcoming analysis. Rather than drawing too quick a conclusion on these preliminary insights from the documentation, I will consider P4's account alongside other participants.

¹⁵² [P4,G,7]

focus to locus, locution of frame pixels
and life good if eyes read by decay of lit icons
eye cadence
spiroglyphs absorbing bodys [sic]
and pixel pixies picked oblique functions of disfunction to this function

In P4's account there is an emphasis on describing the experience of the representational medium. The framing of the dancer's body: only the bottom of feet and lower leg present, but are all "not as present as the one lens". Their previous description of the multiple lenses in the opening paragraphs of their account (television, camera lens, wall and eye) suggests the dominating presence and orientation of different mediums that mediate the body in reception.

The observer's eye objectively oriented in this account resonates with Sartre's positioning of the senses in his chapter on the body in *Being and Nothingness* (1972). Here, Sartre takes up Auguste Comte's statement: "The eye can not see itself" to establish the fact that we are unable to know the senses because the body—as Husserl declares in *Ideas II*—is a *zero point of orientation*.¹⁵³ The senses, for Sartre, are defined by the world of objects in which the body as center unfolds varying distances and orientations in a "system of seen [or felt and tasted] objects" (Sartre 1972, 316). The eyes are objects like other objects in the world. Epistemologically, the body as existent is (for Sartre), a body *being-for-others*. In the act of sensing objects in the world, the body as objective center is both absolute being, and *I who am presence to myself as the being which is its own nothingness* (Sartre 1972, 318).

This early moment in P4's account appears to affirm the transcendental move in Sartre that takes the body, or more specifically the eye, as a mediating object like other objects that frame the performer's body. Why is this significant for my present inquiry? On the one hand, this preliminary analysis demonstrates a single mode in the overall *modus operandi* of phenomenological method that has already been operating over the last two

¹⁵³ For Husserl, the perceiving, sensing body is the reference point for constituting other material things in regards to their nearness, farness, being above or below, left or right to the body. "The Body then has, for its particular Ego, the unique distinction of bearing in itself the *zero point* of all of these orientations" (Husserl 1989, 166). The 'Body' as absolute center cannot always see itself. Unlike Sartre, Husserl is not prepared to see the Body "as a thing like any other in a thingly nexus". The things of the world are always 'there', while the Body is incontrovertibly always 'here'. The eyes functioning as frames alongside other frames (P4) poses an interesting problematic for the Body as an absolute zero point, but not insofar as we can see the eye looking. The edges of this frame are seen as a border or threshold between seeing an aspect of an object and nothing at all. The frames shift their framing possibilities as the head (carrying these frames), and/or whole body moves. Objects falling within our vision may be partially seen, cut off by the frame in the shape of an eye. In constituting spatial relations between the body and material things in the world, the body is perhaps *not* entirely invisible, or withdrawn. Such a point is verifiable if the body 'here' and thing 'there' distinction is blurred by Sartrean object transcendence.

chapters of exposition and documentation; and on the other, my micro-analysis here draws out the theme of *orientation* for further investigation. What is brought to the fore by P4's experience is the issue of the body and its senses in the audiencing of live, mediated events. The eye becomes a lens conflated with the other tools of mediation in P4's experience. When frames of mediation are absent (like screens and lenses) between an audience member and the body of the performer, how do we as spectators experience our senses? Are the eyes objectively experienced as transcendent lenses or framing devices, or does the body and its senses continue to be a zero point of orientation during reception? How does the reception of live, mediated performance (re)constitute our body in relation to such structural questions of orientation? These questions will be considered in my upcoming analysis in *Discovering*.

Workshop#2/Performance #3: *Érection*

Company: Compagnie Dernière Minute, Théâtre National De Toulouse France

Concept, Choreographer, Interpretation, Video: Pierre Rigal

Conception/Art Production: Aurélian Bory

Sound Creation/Music: Sylvain Chaveau, Joan Cambon, Arca

Program: Future Tense

Curation: Mikhail Baryshnikov

Venue: The Playhouse, Sydney Opera House

Program: Adventures07

Season: 1-11 August 2007

Type: Non-interactive mediated contemporary dance performance

“Inspired by everything from Darwinism to science fiction, *Érection* tracks the evolution of man in a constantly evolving visual feat” (Sydney Opera House, programme notes). A solo male dancer on a white mat interacts with line and grid projections that roll out relentlessly. He is grounded, low-level, mostly engaged in athletic and explosive movements. He emerges over the course of the hour to standing, erect. The projections shift from beating out geometric patterns on the mat to replicating the dancer in volumetric digital representations.

Workshop#2/Performance #4: *CPY 17*

Company: Korzo Productions, The Hague, Holland

Choreographer: André Gringas

Video Design: Fabio Iaquone

Performer: Kenneth Flak

Assoc Director/Dramaturg: Sue Jane Stoker

Set & Costume: Justin Giunta and André Gringas

Lighting Design: Ben Fisscher

Type: Non-interactive mediated contemporary dance performance

Combining theatre, dance, video projection, and on-stage installation, *CPY 17* asks what our lives would “be like in a world of genetic engineering and super athletes.” (Sydney Opera House, programme notes). A solo male performer dances in a rectangular box placed

upon the stage. Projections slide along the wall, appearing, disappearing; an amplified voice tells us that he is trapped in this condition. He speaks, sits, moves and plays with a variety of props.

Since this was a double-bill, there was a lengthy intermission period between the two performances. Rather than wait to write Task A at the conclusion of *Érection* we decided to use this time to write in the foyer. On arriving back at the workshop venue, I proceeded with the “Revivification of Attendance” induction and moved onto Task A of the second performance *CPY 17*. We discussed Task A from both performances; and then I instructed participants to write only one Task B on the performance that they were interested in developing. The discussion period was longer and more intense with Group B. I attributed this to the fact that two group members were participating a second time, and one participant who had assisted me on the earlier pilot, a third time. It was immediately apparent that doing phenomenology benefited from repeated practice.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁴ It should be noted that the Writing Tasks from CPY17 (the second performance) did not yield any interesting text for analysis. There was very little mediatation, only a few projections on the box wall.

Case Study #4: Poetics of Reception design project

Pilot Workshop#2 +Workshop#3/Performance#5: Transmission Laboratories

Dates: Pilot-23 May, 2009; Workshop 3-30 May, 2009

Collaborators: Ryan Leech, Miranda Wheen and Jodie McNeilly

Location: AV Studio, Department of Performance Studies, The University of Sydney

By 2009, I felt the need to do one more phenomenology group to support the previous workshops and produce more written data for the final stage of analysis. Faced by a dearth of public, mediated dance performance and very short seasons of one to two performances—making it impossible to coordinate participants together at the same event—I decided to collaborate with media/visual artist Ryan Leech and dancer Miranda Wheen to develop a live, mediated performance.¹⁵⁵ A co-devised performance would enable me to set the conditions for the phenomenology group and refine the framework even further. The *POR Design Project: Transmission Laboratories* produced a second pilot and third workshop, introducing new participants to the practice of phenomenology. The two sessions produced for my study a rich diversity of texts and invaluable insights into the relationship between bodies and technological media, and demonstrated the practical implications for a working model of digital dramaturgy that led to a paper presentation demonstrating these insights for the 2011 Dance Dramaturgy Conference I attended in Toronto, Canada.¹⁵⁶

Identifying the appropriate attentional focus for participants during the first two workshops was a recurring problem. Interactions between bodies and technological media were random and often fleeting, and/or participants were distracted by other moments over the course of the performance. As noted in my previous chapter, step 6 was modified following the first workshop to read:

Tonight's attentional focus will be directed toward: live bodies, technological media: audio-visual material (a screen presence), music/sound, lights, stage, props, other audience members, the auditorium, where you are in consciousness (your memories, imaginings, anticipations), and how you feel. Pay particular attention to the relationships and connections between these.

¹⁵⁵ Dance technology performance events are expensive production pursuits. Time is also an issue for the development of interactive systems, often taking years to develop. Most innovative systems are developed in research contexts, or institutional environments where choreographers/directors can work closely with technicians and designers within a large research project. The Center for Art and Media in Karlsruhe, Germany (ZKM) is an example of a non-academic institution where choreographers can collaborate with interactive designers and programmers in an innovative and experimental research environment. See <http://on1.zkm.de/zkm/e/about>

¹⁵⁶ The Society for Dance History Scholars (SDHS) hosted their 2011 Annual Conference at the Universities of York and Toronto, Canada. The theme: Dance Dramaturgy: catalyst, perspective and memory. See McNeilly (2011, June)

In a general sense, the attentional focus extends to cover a broad range of possible live forms and those that are mediatised. The directive requires elaboration of the phenomena in isolation from each other and in relationship without being too prescriptive. For example, a single body may become mediatised over time during a performance, developing from a live body immersed in the same here-now spatio-temporal space as the audience into a body being projected onto a screen. This process of mediatisation presents an excellent opportunity for a phenomenologically reduced ‘focus’ on a body undergoing the transition from a non-mediatised form to a mediatised representation. However, there are two possible problems with the group attending to this moment and utilising the method in this way: first, if they are over-prepared to the point of waiting for particular moments to occur—say if I had seen the performance beforehand and directed them to pay attention to this particular moment—they would be carried away by anticipation and expectation; second, imposing upon their attentions from outside of the subject’s own experience raises the possibility of missing other moments of interaction that they would be drawn to within their attentional field. I see two possible solutions to these problems. One is to remove all expectation and anticipation in instances of live public events. This was my approach in the two previous workshops, but also the genesis of my problems in regards to the participants’ attentional focus on the type of phenomena and interactions that were conducive to my research. The other solution is to create the conditions for a mediatised performance so that the spectator can be directed to the relations between bodies and the technology in a measured and dynamic way. For example, the following *attentional relations* (non-exhaustively) could be scripted for participants before their experience of the performance to mitigate any anxiety caught up with searching for the right relation to focus upon.

- 1) A live body becoming mediatised
- 2) A screen body: projected on a monitor (scale)
- 3) A live body in relationship to its live-feed image
- 4) A live body in relationship to its pre-recorded image displayed as film/video
- 5) A live body in relationship to other projected media
- 6) A live body interacting with projected media
- 7) A live body’s interaction with a system affecting other media

These proto-relations informed the approach to my final group and the set-up between the media, dancer and space for the performance installation. In the end the set-up itself (described below) modified these preliminary suggestions. Participants were prepared in the same way as before, receiving a *revised* information pack (See Appendix A) and a short induction before the session. A door separated the workshop and performance space, providing convenience, uninterrupted togetherness, and minimised the gap between the preparatory embodied induction, experiencing the performance, the writing phase and discussion period.

The pilot and workshop took place in the Audio-Visual Room at the Department of Performance Studies, The University of Sydney over two weekends in May of 2009. Ryan and I spent some time discussing the set-up and type of technology that would create the highest number of opportunities for interactivity between the dancer, media and audience. It was a set up well within our budget and easy to bump in and out of the space. I decided the performance should possess no pre-intended theme or concept; the choreography was also not set. Miranda was free to create whatever movement emerged for her in the moment. Once the design of the installation was established with my collaborators, I developed a *script for mediatisation* to organise the format of the workshop. The script triangulated specific ‘attentional relations’ for Ryan, Miranda and the roving spectators to follow during the performance stage of the workshop. Initially the script was developed to direct attentions toward selected interactions—an opportunity not available in a non-installation based public performance—and to provide duration of a specific interaction within the experience of the spectator/analyst. The script and time given to each individual interaction provided insight into what worked as a relationship between the dancer, media and audience, indicating the potential for a digital dramaturgy from such methods. Setting the conditions for research permitted me to investigate specific relations of my choosing, and created the possibility for the emergence of new ones.

The set up for *Transmission Laboratories* included a small toy electric train with microprocessor for serial delay that moved in a forward and backwards motion on a circular track, diameter 130cm. The train carried an on-board processor which interprets serial language (an off shoot of the common language known as C) sent from a computer. The microprocessor onboard the train, the ‘decoder’, decodes messages and creates actions relating to audio, steam, lights, motor speed and direction. This is achieved by a series of relays activated and deactivated with power and signal control sent/received through the

tracks. Placed on the periphery of the square performance space (3m x 4m), the track was within two meters of the operating desk where Ryan controlled the train and the live mixing of streamed and playback images. A Sony HD camera was placed over the circular track, lit by a single overhead light feeding the activity within this fixed frame into one of the two computers. This was the only site of visual input. Two wireless operated cameras were attached to the train's two carriages, pointing upwards and downwards at roughly a 45-degree angle to capture Miranda's upper and lower body (respectively) when positioned inside the circle track. This was one site of interaction. The recording would occur while the train continuously moved in either a forward or backwards motion. The speed of the train varied in the open play of interaction between Miranda and Ryan. Operating the train from a nearby desk, Ryan could either watch the interaction in three dimensions, or streamed live as a two-dimensional image picked up by the camera and displayed on the monitor as video input for mixing. Ryan uses *Isadora* software, a graphic programming environment designed by digital performance maker Mark Coniglio, the inventor of the *midi dancer*.¹⁵⁷ Interaction is key to most live digital performance events. Coniglio is interested in the live, and not the recorded, the unpredictable, rather than the pre-determined. *Isadora* enables real-time manipulation of digital media that is captured live during a performance, or taken from a library of prerecorded images. It is not a 'plug-in-and-play' program; rather, it offers the media artist a mixing palette of *actors*—the *Isadora* term for building blocks, or modules—which structure the media (video, audio or MIDI) in relation to the kind of system or context that the artist wants to create, such as playback video or as an interactive response.

¹⁵⁷ Mark Coniglio co-founded the arts organization *Troika Ranch* in 1994 with choreographer/media artist Dawn Stopiello. Based now in Portland, Oregon, *Troika Ranch* creates "hybrid artworks through an ongoing examination of the moving body and its relationship to technology" (<http://www.troikaranch.org/about.html>). The *midi dancer* is a system of flexion sensors that are wirelessly attached to the joints of a dancer's body. This movement information is fed back to a computer for visual and/or audio output within the same performing space. Coniglio provides interactive control to the performers "as a way of imposing the chaos of the organic on to the fixed nature of the electronic, ensuring that the digital materials remain as fluid and alive as the performers themselves" (Coniglio in Carver and Beardon 2004, 5-12).

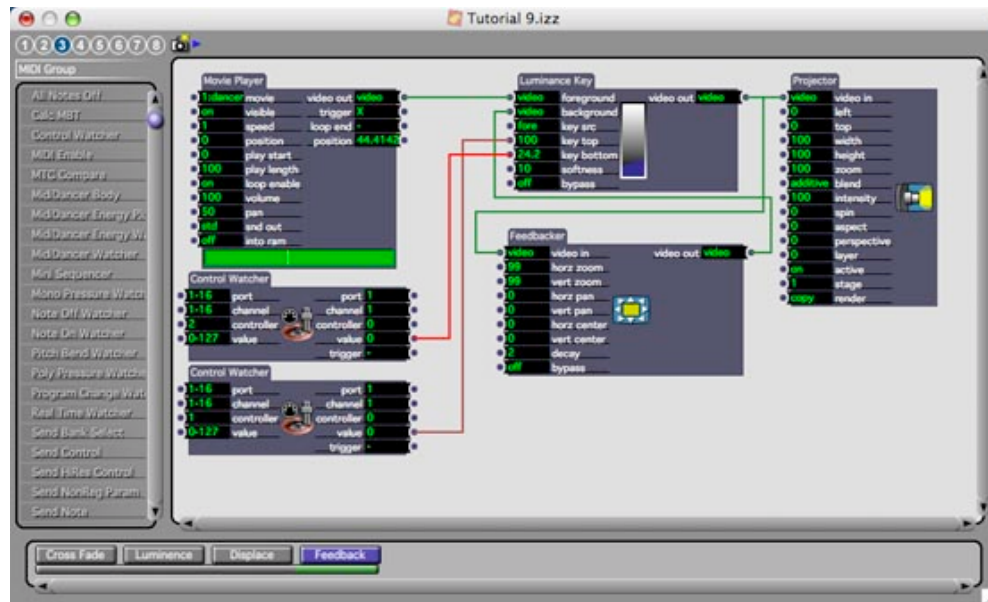


Figure 3: A snapshot of the Isadora application window showing the relationship between inputs and outputs, along with how the treatments on all outputs are mixed live.

Another site of interaction was located in the opposite corner to the train track. Footage from the overhead fixed camera recording the inside of the track and the dancer when she entered was streamed onto this other area of the space through a projector placed overhead at a right angle to the floor.¹⁵⁸ This site was one of two output points. The malt-toffee colored parquet floor offered a grainy texture that warmed the image of the dancer dressed in white. Miranda would appear then disappear from the circle of projected light as she stepped inside and outside of the track at the first site of input interaction. Miranda's digital double gave participants the impression that she was standing in a hole when looking up at the camera, or crouching in a hole when squatting. This provoked different "hole" related images for participants that were never intended (some were reminded of the torture and prisoner abuse in Iraq's Abu-Ghraib Prison in 2004, or of Alice, down the rabbit hole in Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*). The performance was created with no theme or narrative. Discussions and descriptions about interactions emerging from this site indicated to me how the structure (perhaps even content) of audience experience could be beneficial in a

¹⁵⁸ During the pilot session the projector overheated, causing the lamp to burn out. This was due to the projector being placed upside down at a perpendicular angle to the floor. The fan was unable to cool the device at this angle. For the following workshop, the projector angle was modified using a mirror to reflect the image onto the floor. The effect was exactly the same, with the resolution of the image only slightly softer due to the mediation of the mirror.

dramaturgical process for digital performance, especially in the triangulated design of interactions between performers, the media and audience. The simplicity of projecting an overhead image onto the floor; the dancer's relationship to the vertical (looking up and crouching down); and her play upon the periphery of the frame, including exits and entrances, present several moments for analysis from within the experience of the audience embodying the corporeal and projected form of the dancer within real and recorded time.

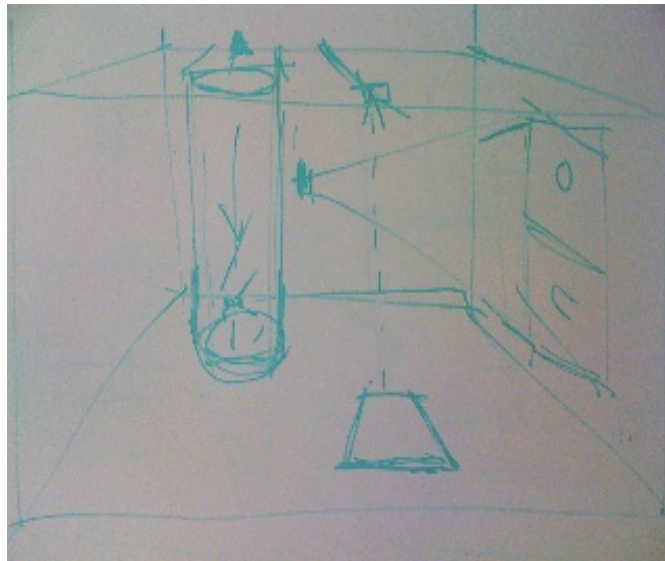


Figure 4: A sketch by Ryan of the room set-up for *Transmission Laboratories*. The sketch shows the three sites of interaction

The final site of interaction was a single screen (standard 4:3) suspended to the left of Ryan, enclosing the stage space as part of its perimeter. Projections from Ryan's visual mixing on Isadora included real-time footage, play back and text. The screen was split into an equal top and bottom half, referencing outputs from the two separate wireless cameras attached to the top of the rear train carriage. The top and bottom frames sometimes shared the same image of Miranda, images from earlier footage, or an immediate real-time streaming in the top half, while the bottom displayed images in playback. The split frames wove the temporal dimensions of past, present, and future with the presence of the corporeal dancer moving in the space. The temporal manipulation of video distorted the overall immediacy of the live performer and her live capture. Both a complexity and depth in the temporal reception of Miranda's corporeal and digitally extended body became apparent when the entire installation was perceived together, a perspective that included the screen images,

corporeal dancer, train and floor projections. Despite including playback footage, the images on the screen maintained a sense of immediacy and connectedness to the live dancer, train, projections and audience members. While standing in the space amongst these sites of interaction, the group were often seen reflected in the screen image, either captured and streamed live, or from a moment past and replayed. The only sounds to be heard in the performance were the noises of the train in motion: speeding up, slowing down and coming to a halt, and the breath from Miranda's efforts.



Figure 5: The split screen projected image of Miranda's feet recorded from the Transmission Laboratories Workshop and presented in playback during a second research-based installation of the project at the *time · transcendence · performance* (TTP) Conference, Monash University, Caulfield, 1-3 October 2009. Photo by Heidrun Löhr.

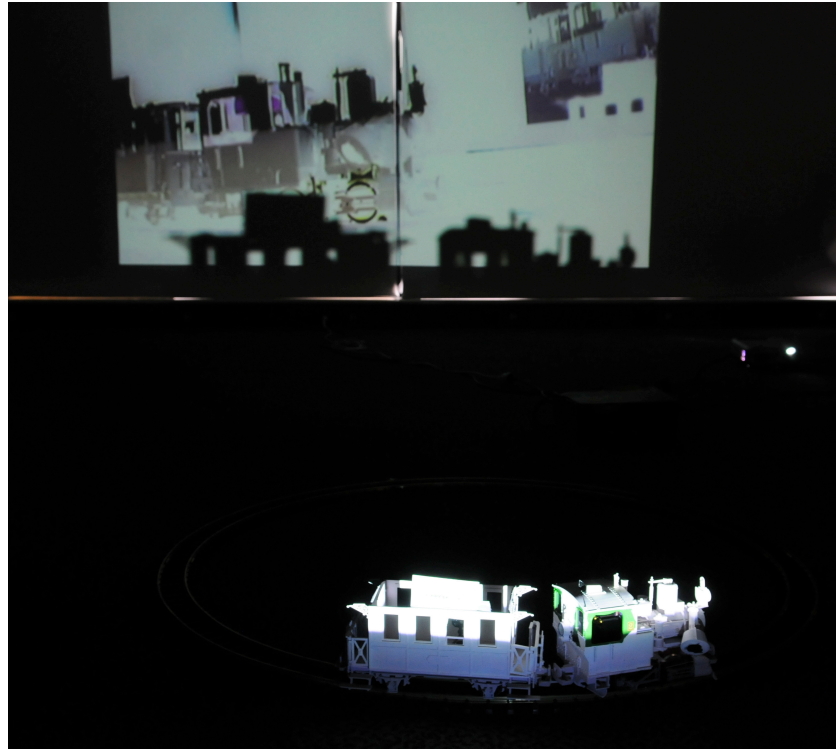


Figure 6: The micro-processor train. TTP Conference 2009. Photo by Heidrun Löhr.

Script for Mediatisation

The workshop followed a procedure similar to that used in the *Poetics of Reception*: invitation and reading preparation; participants briefed on site to discuss any concerns with their understanding of what was expected; and a preparatory embodied induction for the phenomenological and attentional reductions. Due to the location of the performance space and workshop room, with a door separating the two spaces, the relationship between witnessing and writing became more entwined. Initially I imagined discretely set time frames, as shown in the original table inserted below. For the pilot, there were two temporal sections. In the first, participants roamed freely in the performance installation for ten minutes. This was followed by a fifteen-minute writing period.

By the workshop, I had decided upon specific attentional relations and time frames for attending to the performance and writing. To complement the fluid nature of the framework, I allowed the session to establish its own time-frame based on the energy of the performance and participants. The table below represents a matrix of relations that involved the switching of attentions between Miranda, Ryan and the audience. Miranda and Ryan worked with the script, but it was too interruptive for the audience to impose the changes I

initially intended. In the first section (ten minutes), I had them experience the performance freely, followed by fifteen minutes of writing. In the second section they were free to choose one or two relations (e.g. attending to the dancer only, or to the screen, or projection), switching when they wanted. Miranda and Ryan moved through the relations by observing the script.

The table below is an example of how a researcher or practitioner using such methods could begin to map precisely the interactions and their reception. I realised the potential for controlling the conditions and attentional focus with such a script, an activity that would be useful in the staging of interactions. However, I did not take advantage of mapping with precision the overlapping instances of scripted attentions between Miranda, Ryan and the audience. Instead, I permitted the event to be fluid for the spectator and to not detract from their experiencing of the event. Overall, my script was inappropriate for this stage of the research, but I felt it indicated a potentially efficacious method for a dramaturgy of digital performance.

Original Script for Mediatisation: Attentional Relations

Transmission laboratories

Demonstration

AV Room, Department of Performance Studies, The University of Sydney

23 May 2009

Script for Mediatisation

SECTION ONE:

Performance Installation

- 10 mins: 5 mins shrouded; 5 mins unshrouded

Participants will write for 15 Mins

SECTION TWO (10 mins): Attentional Relations

RELATION NO.	DURATION	MIRANDA	RYAN	AUDIENCE
1	9 mins AUDIENCE Attending TO miri	Reacting with train 1.5 mins	Looking at WALL Screen 5mins 5mins 5mins 5mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 • Attending to Miri (1.5) 2 • Attending to WALL screen (1.5) 3 • Attending to FLOOR Screen (1.5) 4 • Attending to ALL (1.5)
W1				WRITING FOR 5 MINS
2	9 mins	Reacting with train 1.5 min	Reacting to Miri and Train	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending to Miri (1.5) • Attending to WALL screen (1.5) • Attending to ALL (1.5)
W2				WRITING FOR 5

7relations
7relations
7relations
7relations
miri goes to floor project

				MINS
3	6 mins	Watching WALL Screen 1.5 mins	Watching WALL Screen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending to Miri (1.5) • Attending to WALL screen (1.5) • Attending to FLOOR Screen (1.5) • Attending to ALL (1.5)
W3				WRITING FOR 5 MINS
4	6 mins	Watching WALL Screen 1.5 mins	Reacting to Miri and Train	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending to Miri (1.5) • Attending to WALL screen (1.5) • Looking at FLOOR Screen (1.5) • Attending to ALL (1.5)
W4				WRITING FOR 5 MINS
5	6 mins	Interacting with train 1.5 mins	RYAN WRITES PHENOMNEOLOGICALLY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending to Miri(1.5) • Attending to WALL screen (1.5) • Looking at FLOOR Screen (1.5) • Attending to ALL (1.5)
W5				WRITING FOR 5 MINS
6	6 mins	Interacting	RYAN WRITES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending to

		With screen <i>1.5 mins</i>	PHENOMNEOLOGICALLY	Miri(1.5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending to WALL screen (1.5) • Looking at FLOOR Screen (1.5) • Attending to ALL (1.5)
W6				
7		Paying attention to both <i>1.5 mins</i>	Paying attention to both	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending to Miri(1.5) • Attending to WALL screen (1.5) • Looking at FLOOR Screen (1.5) • Attending to ALL (1.5)

Figure 7: Original Script for Mediatisation used in *Transmission Laboratories*, Workshop#3

With two pilots and three workshops complete, my method for a *Poetics of Reception* has departed only marginally from the original pilot. The iterative nature of its framework has refined my approach (pointing to the possibility of further refinement) and introduced a self-devised ‘performance as research’ project to avail the possibility of improving the method and deepening my insights into the essential structures and modes of the relationship between bodies and digital media. In order to further address this relationship, the emphasis now becomes textual.

From the Mixed Reality Project I was able to identify the dimensional importance in the relationship between presentation and experiential reception in live, mediated events, and to trace the genealogy of screen mediations from the point of presentation to its origin. From the case studies, I have drawn out the following aspects to consider in the next stage of analysis: the dimensional relations of receptivity, the matter of orientation for the spectator, and embodiment in receptivity.

From my earlier analysis of the performer *Rosi* dancing with her shadows, I demonstrated two directions in analysis that could be taken during the final stages of phenomenological procedure. The first direction is the ongoing process of imaginative variation that is the engine of eidetic analysis, and describes the present stage of my investigation in the case studies just discussed. The second is to stop any further investigation of performative variants and take—say with the *Rosi* example—*spatio-temporal separation* of supra-extension as the invariant without further interpretation, and then elaborate upon this aspect either in philosophical terms, or in relation to what others have said in the performance studies, communication, or media arts discourses.

A third interpretive direction is described by Spiegelberg as *hermeneutic phenomenology*, and characterises the method of post-Husserlian phenomenologists such as Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty and Ricoeur.

Hermeneutic phenomenology must aim at something different and more ambitious: its goal is the discovery of meanings which are not immediately manifest to our intuiting, analysing, and describing. Hence the interpreter has to go beyond what is directly given. In attempting this, he has to use the given as a clue for meanings which are not given, or at least not explicitly given (Spiegelberg 1965, 695).

Interpretation that goes beyond the given appears to be in conflict with getting *back to the things themselves*. However, hermeneutic interpretation is phenomenological if it does not construct through inference, but unveils hidden meanings by accessing the layers “which can

be uncovered” but are not “immediately manifest” (Spiegelberg 1965, 695). I will now work through the textual accounts from the *Poetics of Reception* pilots and workshops in order to elaborate with phenomenological distinction the essential structure of the phenomena from these investigated experiences expressed through language. The work, now, becomes a hermeneutic activity.

SECTION 4

DISCOVERING

An aphorism, honestly cast and stamped, is still some way from being 'deciphered' once it has been read, rather, it is only then that its interpretation can begin, and for this an art of interpretation is required.
Friedrich Nietzsche, *On The Genealogy of Morals*, 1887 (9)

So far I have problematised a claim within performance studies; discussed and reoriented a debate on the relationship between the live and mediated; and designed a method and applied it to a concrete relation of interactions between bodies and technological media within dance performance events. I have developed a model for practising group phenomenology, and discovered that the practical methods of phenomenology promoted an iterative framework that has been continually refined in application over several workshops. As a result of this process, encounters between bodies and media have been phenomenologically attended to and described, resulting in a rich variance of texts written by a number of participants for eidetic analyses. In this chapter, six *interactive encounters* of a dancing body in relationship to various forms of digital media have been identified from two of the mediated public dance performances attended, and the devised installation performance/workshop explained in the previous chapter. The poetic contributions of participants' experiences have been divided into what I have called *encounters*: (1) Digital Touch; (2) Moving with Digital Other; (3) Hybridity; (4) Transmorphing; (5) Environment; and (6) Expressing the Inner. The function of these encounters is to organise the process of textual analysis, whereby the elaboration and schematising of essential structures and their distinctive modes take place through a process of eidetic analysis.

Before proceeding with a discussion of the encounters that help to organise the structural elaborations of the relations given in audience receptivity, I will outline my procedure for textual analysis with samples.

In order to understand the experience of corporeal bodies and digital technologies in complex performative relationships, my textual analysis seeks to disclose the essential aspects of an individual's account across the writing tasks they produced, and more universally across all group accounts. In stage one of the textual analysis, I attend carefully and intuitively to the participants' texts, breaking-up the writing into short phrases. As can be seen from the sample below, I transcribe in **black text** the writer's words where legible. In some of the transcription I have added or taken punctuation away to improve readability. As indicated earlier, participants were encouraged to not adhere to the rules and conventions of writing in order to avoid stymieing description. The **red text** represents my primary analysis, and functions to identify encounters and alert me to structures. While conducting this analysis, I attempted to stay open to any insights, however ridiculous, contradictory, or irrelevant they seemed. Eventually, some of these earlier insights proved to be inconsequential and I pursued only threads of logically intuited significance. The **blue text** is where I begin to connect these themes and insights of experiences across tasks and participants' accounts, either describing the same performance, or a different one where there was evidence of a similar *encounter*. The **green text** illustrates my elaboration relative to other texts and ideas with reference to other literature.

Task A

Emptiness - - fluorescence tubes of light criss-crossing the delineated space, a body emerges on the edge of the space,

Emergence, a body emerging. There is a strong sense of generation, something forming in this text. The space (white rectangular mat) was empty, demarcated, ready for things to emerge. Edges, frames, clear delineations

Light: what is its purpose in these performance events?

an organic form on the frame of pure white, folded over, crawling at a slow pace - animal or human - crawling, no trawling, along the grid from left to right

Relationship between body, space (from purity of white to a grid) described: organic form versus rectilinear grid. A form (animal or human)...why is the humanness of the performer questioned? Is it the movement or juxtaposition to the technology?

See *Erection_GA,P2* for discussion on human seen like an animal. They write "Allowing the animal all fours graceful and easy query", my analysis raises the possibility that this image of a quadroped is 'easier to digest' than some of the other images that the writer responds to.

Why do we see an animal or question the humanness of the performer when they crawl on all fours? Does the representational world intensify with technology? If we engage the device of modalisation (a situation where it could be otherwise): if there were no projected grid lines, would the performer be just considered a performer crawling? Why do we need to morphologise the body? Is this a demand of bodies interacting with technology?

A twitching soundtrack sputters and spurts. *A bug caught in the death lights of an insect zapper.*

The writer morphologises and transcends the performer body in relation to the grid lines and sound track in a descriptive metaphor (CHECK THIS): the performer is a bug. If we push this further, the performer is: attracted, tricked, slave to its own imperative to have light, drawn in, bedazzled, facing its futility...

The sense of threat begins to riddle the text...the digital 'other' something to be feared? Our reception of the corporeal in fear of the media?

Figure 8: Excerpt from Stage One of Textual Analysis

During Stage One, I am mostly concerned with the repetition of linguistic motifs, emergent themes, patterns, and points of difference in descriptions of the performance that the language illuminates in its rich poetic variance across the single account. I ask questions, make suggestions about the meaning of the words and metaphors used. All interpretation is intended as revelatory in the hermeneutic sense, and is not used to work out or validate what the performance meant in terms of its narrative or overarching intended meaning. Interpretation creeps into the participants' accounts on occasion and is often recognised by the writer themselves:

[i]nsisting on taking my head out of the carriage to observe the airy impact of speeding train on cavernous dark. This is a thought that occurs and reoccurs. It is however, subordinated as the surplus of effect and meaning enact upon me. I rush toward interpretation of the images and actions before me just as my epiphanies about my Freudian past arise (no pun intended). To describe. To notice. To see what I see. The dancer, the train, the screen and the projection on the floor [P8,TL,1].

I accept the interpretive, rather than dismiss it, but only when it works towards elucidating structures.

For the second stage of analysis, I tacked between these typed up transcriptions with interpretive notes and a notebook where I began to consolidate connections and distill structural themes. This activity enabled me to establish systematic sense from the many texts and preliminary insights and to identify six interactive encounters. On these pages (see sample below) I was able to disclose eight structural relation and their varying modes to be presented in the sections to come.

ENCOUNTER ONE: DIGITAL TOUCH

Digital Doubles

Alchemy—mixed together (shares with DO)

Modes of Digital touch

Supra-extension

ex: a silhouette cast from the body and light from the silhouette

expressing the inner (examples)

*
napki
lab

Permeability

Permeability of boundaries or thresholds between skin of bodies and skin of projections (D Doubling)

Permeability implies a direction/intention:

(i) Media into body: "ooze in" -- Penetration by the acting-upon

"absorbs" -- Acceptance by the acted-upon

"inflow" -- Penetration that is not one of acting upon, arises out of ambiguity

INK
UPON

(ii) Media out of body: "bleeds" -- neutral relational structure of action

The committed string-fish your bleeding fathom. [P4,G,6]

"dribbled out" -- the body leaks the inky black

The demons are now beneath inky her dribbled out. [C1,G,6]

(iii) Body out of media: "pop out of" -- explosive outward movement penetrating boundary/membrane of media

(iv) Media with body: "blending" -- a mutual meeting of dimensions

Possession

Later the possession takes over. Writhing, shrieking, moaning. Stilled. A brush of one arm and then the other, revealing dark traces of angel wings. The body becomes a brush, tracing inky impressions on the floor. To stand and the inky stains become ectoplasm. A life of their own, they morph and ooze back into her standing body. [P1,G,4]

Digital
Other

There is a complex of encounters here that quickly transitions. The performer undergoes two transmorphisms (angel and brush) whereby the relational structure of action is instrumental: the body traces. There is a separation of this

WHERE?
CHUCKY FOR
STANDING

ultimately
changes for an angel (hybrid) to a brush (transmorphic)
as angel brush traces the inky impressions

Figure 9: Excerpt from Stage Two of Textual Analysis

The overall procedure for textual analysis is intuitive and open to ongoing refinement. It is rigorous and fine-grained, requiring diligence and discipline to mine the writing, reveal the structures, make distinctions and connections in terms of their modes and numerous case sensitive orderings. Only on a structural level are we raised from the particular to generality. The process of eidetic variation is richest in the sifting through of variances to affirm invariance. The remaining pages of this dissertation demonstrate this sifting and distilling process, a process revealing the rough and complex contours of becoming structures. Indeed, here, I approach each encounter of interaction non-exhaustively.

All abstractions emerge from the textual accounts of participants. I proceed with little presupposition and retrieve the encounters from an examination of these accounts, paying close attention to what structurally comes to the fore. A logical ordering of distinctive modes is not imposed from the outside, but is generated by the emerging system as the analysis develops. Such a presentation of results organises and makes accessible the findings for reading. Like the encounters, the structures are also inexhaustible. My case studies delimit their number.

Limits to Phenomena and Phenomenology

Each written account may be approached more than once to mine for deeper structures of the core relation, corporeal bodies interacting with digital media. A particular question, theme or problem orients the analysis of the text differently, and delimits the elaboration of eidetic structures in a diversity of ways. It is not in the spirit of phenomenological inquiry to fix any meaning, or provide a one-sided perspective on phenomena. This is often the misconception of a Husserlian inspired phenomenology. The pursuit for essential structures or invariants is not the attainment of some static, non-becoming aspect, even when there are limits to uncovering founding structures. Keeping this always in mind, there are two desiderata for a case of limits in my study. The first is the ‘identity limits of an object’; the second is ‘the imposed limits to structural elaboration’. The first desideratum can extend to account for the second; I intend to explain how over the next few paragraphs. Klaus Held observes that:

[w]hen we run through the variants of an object, we can pay attention to its limits, that is, how far can we go before the imagined object or its comprehending act becomes something else, before it loses its identity (Held 2003, 16-17).

I indeed found that participants describing a moment of interaction during performance quickly met the identity limits of a form before it became “something else”. In the reception of aesthetic objects that move, and move quickly, the identity limits are met sooner than with stable objects of perception, such as that tree, book, or table before me. There is a continual modification of the sense of a thing in its constitution. As we move and change in the experience, so does the thing. This movement is identified in Husserl as a ‘constitutive-duet’ occurring in all perceptual activities between object and subject. In my study, this thing (or phenomenon) is a relation between things. This relation is sometimes a new thing (a singular form) or continues to be two forms relating in a particular way. Where interactive technologies are involved, aesthetic forms accelerate the forming of the formed, and a (dis)forming and transforming movement of identity within receptivity. The “something else” transitions are rapid.¹⁵⁹ Such speeds were evidenced in all six encounters of the relation within the dance technology events attended. Take for example, a participant’s description of one form quickly transforming into another: “*Boxed, it’s following her*”, then, “*It’s a great labyrinth – Fuck it’s beautiful*” [P2,G,2]. Here, I trace three movements of the mediatic form ‘it’: (1) “boxed” (environment); (2) “following her” (dance with digital other); and (3) “great labyrinth” (environment). Moreover, the forms are transforming on two temporal tracks: the original track of immediate experience, and the reproduced track for phenomenological description. It is possible that other forms were overlooked in recounting the original chain of forms, and it is difficult to ascertain the duration of each transformational movement from the written work alone. This lends itself again to the inexhaustible and incomplete nature of the process.

Phenomenological descriptions follow the path of reproduction (memory). Remembering can often be accurately chronological in reproduction, but in my workshops this greatly depended upon the participant. Discrepancies or partial expressions of a direct experience do not detract from the revelatory procedure of structural elaboration.

¹⁵⁹ A modification of sense in the perception of everyday objects is not always involved in a rapid change of limit identities. However, in cases of ‘doubt’ about the identity of an object the limits of identity may change rapidly, say for example the mistaken identity of a black bucket in perception first seen as a skunk, then a black cat, followed by a log, but as I move closer (in the space of seconds) the true identity of the object as a black bucket is established. Husserl calls this experience a “mode of negation”, a “disappointment” in the synthetic fulfillment of an object within perception (“concordance”). This particular *modalisation* can involve a process of what he calls a “retroactive crossing out”. This transforming of identity limits, as I am using it here, resonates with Husserl’s complex temporalising schema that to pursue now would lead me away from my own phenomenological analysis. For more on this see “The Mode of Negation” in Husserl (2001, 63-72).

The second desideratum relates to limiting the structures themselves. Despite reducing the experiences to six types of encounters, the structures and modes in themselves are inexhaustible. Inexhaustibility requires a further limit to be imposed (unlike perception where the very process of an identity limit for a form is its limit). If no limit is imposed (as with desideratum one) the relation itself, in a more general sense, may become “something else”. In order to not lose the phenomenon under examination, I pause within my phenomenology. It is not an arbitrary imposition, but one sensitive to the limits of the relation in its shared constitution of meaning in a performance context.

Problem of Immediacy

In Chapter 5, I pointed to the problem of a temporal discrepancy between spectating the event and writing descriptions. As an aid to my spectators, I included a revivification-embodied exercise, taking participants back to the performance through images, and motivating their embodied memories of being-there at the event. The objective temporal gap between immediate experience and writing in my research is much wider than the examples provided by Casey’s documentation of Spiegelberg’s static objects; and narrower than the call to experience of the moral emotions in Steinbock’s phenomenology. In my project, phenomena are immediately reproduced from a present event; the memory may be considered primary, closer to the original event than a secondary memory. As a result, the language tense used by participants is mostly in the present. Some passages are written in past tense, and in some cases, a shift between tenses occurs.

Arms and legs stick out an awkward angle, and moving as if in choreography with one another like synchronized dancers. Again the sense of a disconnect from the head [present tense] . . . The head would look around, observing the body moving in this way. His body was nearly never erect [past tense]. Maybe once, almost, when he was going around and around, these backward steps [P4,E,3].

A movement in the consciousness of the event as a temporal feature of the participant can be traced here. While describing, the participant telescopically moves from the detail of the body in present tense (“stick”, rather than “stuck”) and then draws out from this pinpoint focus to take in the horizon of the performance as a means to compare one moment with others: “his body was nearly never erect”. The participant seems to create a distance between themselves and the event when using past tense. This indicates the quickest path from description to

interpretation and/or abstraction. It appears that their recollections are elegantly bridled from a raw poetics of immediacy.

Her eyeline searches—different level down, reptilian strong lines rolling, whipping, shifting torso mapping floor dragging face. Melting, bubbling, conditioning wiped away clean—nothing there now, slate clean but screamatic sound—a trace [CI,G,2].

Amoeba—Escher world—fall into the black vertigo—precision spinning [P2,E,1].

Writing in the present tense helps to retain the memory of an image in its original richness, as though the senses are still experiencing the event. All accounts shift between past, present and future tenses, but in most cases are written as though occurring in the immediacy of the present.¹⁶⁰ My phenomenological approach does not favour one tense over another, nor do I see one tense offering more of what Riffaterre (1981) identifies as “verisimilitude”, “accuracy” or “verifiability” of reality in this pursuit for essential structures (107). Strict reference to, or the “verifiability” of reality in receptive figurations of embodied imagery is not causally necessitated. A given world of objects is presupposed; this is a condition of phenomenology. The interactions along with the spectator-analyst co-constitute image perceptions within the temporal flow of an attentive consciousness. As unreal as imaginings may seem, they pervade our lived reality.

¹⁶⁰ The tenses in the writing of experiences are discussed at length in ethnography, literature and phenomenology. Anthropologist Kirsten Hastrup defends the ethnographic present in a postmodern era, and views the present tense in writing as “not solely an accidental temporal mode”, but a constructed one “preserving the reality of anthropological knowledge” (Hastrup 2009, 45). Edward S. Casey considers the use of tenses in the relationship between literary description and philosophical description, providing examples from Proust and Merleau-Ponty. From Merleau-Ponty’s descriptions, Casey notes that there are:

[n]o evidential clues to the effect, that this description might be the reconstruction of some actual scene . . . The present tense is not even the historical present of fiction—which it has been argued, is itself not present at all—but what we might call a philosophical quasi-present, a permanent present which is essentially tenseless (Casey 1981, 179).

Players in Play: a note on terminology within analysis

Who are the players in aesthetic play? Drawing on the tripartite model offered by Gadamer discussed in Chapter 2, the core players include the performer, audience (spectator-analyst), and media objects (technology). The interaction between bodies and media triangulate with audience. Maintaining a sense of aesthetic play in triangulation is extremely significant for preventing mediated performance events from being understood only in light of critical frameworks that certain theories in the philosophy of technology and art offer when contemplating the relations between machines and bodies, and the impact of technologies on persons and world. The audience is indicated in several ways as a player in the co-constitution of the object-event. As individual spectators writing descriptions, they co-create the interactions. An experience of triangulation is identified by each writer, but described differently. The object-event is constituted by a nexus of players beyond the individual; *we, our, us* moments are described as: ‘shared’, ‘intimate’, ‘together’, ‘open’, and ‘at one’.

To vary the language without repetition, I use several different terms as proper nouns to describe the same experience or thing, thus ensuring that there are no slippages in terms. As a phenomenologist, it is not the concepts or terms that are being examined. Rather, it is the experiences and players co-constituting the interactions that become significant. The following list will help to consolidate synonymous terms (both singular and plural) in order to indicate the triangulation of three core players.

MEDIA	PERFORMER	AUDIENCE (PLURAL)
LIGHT	CORPOREAL BODY/BODY	AUDIENCE MEMBER (SINGULAR)
(DIGITAL) TECHNOLOGIES	FLESHLY BEING/BEING	SPECTATOR-ANALYST
PROJECTION	DANCER	SPECTATOR
MEDIATIC (QUALITY)	SUBJECT	PARTICIPANT
LINES		WRITER
		PERCEIVER

Eidetic Analysis of a Complex Relational Event in Representation

In his *Phenomenology*, Jean-François Lyotard states that when psychologism posits “no ultimate truth independent of the psychological workings” of conceptual principles, “truth becomes *belief* reinforced by success” (Lyotard 1991, 37-8, italics my emphasis).¹⁶¹ In the phenomenological investigation of aesthetic based representations, the objective ideal of experienced forms—such as the hybrid (“cyber being”, “electric body”, “angel”)—that phenomenology seeks to affirm becomes problematised. The momentarily identified form (‘before it becomes something else’) appears to provide no criterion for truth by way of an objective ideal, that is, the phenomenological type of objectivity (its *noematic* core) that clings to all subjective variations run through in the forming of knowledge about that thing. For example, consider the simple mathematical shape of a triangle. Depending on the different perceivers’ predications of that triangle identified in its subjective variants: red, small, shiny, “all triangles are, by their essence, convex” (Lyotard 1991, 39). Now in seeking the invariance of a relational event in the domain of representation, as I set out to do, the objective ideal (to employ Lyotard’s term) is in fact the revealed structural processes and modes co-constituted by the spectators. These variances of experience are not nonessential variants, but understood to be invariants of the phenomenon. For in the absence of these structural processes and modes, the interactions themselves would cease to exist. To clarify this point, let us consider Lyotard’s discussion of the rectangular triangle.

Even a rectangular triangle possesses an ideal objectivity in the sense that it is the subject of a collection of predicates [made by the perceivers], inalienable on pain of *losing* the rectangular triangle itself (Lyotard 1991, 39).

¹⁶¹ This is precisely the “skepticism” of truth that Husserl challenges with phenomenology in his project to overcome empirical psychologism: the crisis of a positivistic approach bearing upon the humanities in regard to questions and issues about human existence. See “Part I: The crisis of the sciences as expression of the radical life-crisis of European humanity” in Husserl (1970, pp. 3-16).

From a first and second stage analysis of participants' writings, I identified the following six encounters listed above. To reiterate: (1) Digital Touch; (2) Moving with Digital Other; (3) Hybridity; (4) Transmorphism; (5) Environment and New Worlds; (6) Expressing the Inner. I will briefly describe each encounter in turn; consider their ordering and transitional movements as they appear in the experience of interactions; and then outline the co-constituted structures and modes of interaction revealed by the phenomenology. The presentation and organisation of the revealed structures will weave the discussion back through each of the encounters such that the interactions are understood more deeply in terms of their structures and distinctive modes.

The nature of a descriptive science, with imperatives to understand the things in themselves, prevents fixing an absolute schematic with neat contours and isolable categories—such as one might find in the great systems of classification by Charles Sanders Peirce in philosophy (1839—1914), or Francis Bacon in the physical sciences (1561—1626). However, for the purpose and ease of communication, I have done my best to clearly show connections by schematising these experiential findings into a coherent picture, resisting as much as possible the imposition of a logical ordering or systematising that entirely abandons the dynamic movement of the interactions. These encounters of interactions triangulate the relation between performer, media and audience and take place in the syntheses of embodied perceptual receptivity. They strike an allure on one's entire sensorium, experienced, then expressed through a rich and varied poetic language.

1 **DIGITAL TOUCH (DP)**

The interaction of digital touch involves a close spatial, surface and multi-directional penetrating relation between the boundaries and thresholds of the fleshly performer body and illuminating media. It is a meaningful meeting between a three-dimensional body and two-dimensional light source. Mixed together, absorbing, leaking, flowing, and blending, the intentional act and dimensionality on either side (performer and media) undergoes a range of transformations and conversions. It is also a site where instances of a performer and their digital image (*digital double*) in mirror like replication, meet in playful, co-relative and violent forms of touch.¹⁶² Digital touch emerges from other encounters in a dynamically constituted flow of interactions. The modes of touch relative to the structures revealed include:

Extension

Permeability with directions (media into body; media out of body; body out of body; media with body)

Possession

Reversability

Wearability

Interference

¹⁶² In *Digital Performance*, Steve Dixon provides a thoroughgoing analysis to categorise the digital double into four different types: reflection; alter-ego; spiritual emanation; and manipulable mannequin (Dixon 2007, 241-70). He draws on the psychoanalytic theories of Freud (the uncanny) and Lacan; theatre history: Artaud and his double; and the skepticism of Baudrillard. He describes a number of performances to explore these different manifestations of the digital double.

All types of digital doubles can be conceptualised as some form of technological reflection of a live body, in our categorizations we are specifically defining the reflection double as a digital image that mirrors the identical visual form and realtime movement of the performer or interactive user (Dixon 2007, 250).

2 MOVING WITH DIGITAL OTHER (DO)

The performer and media move together in a duet, they are together and apart, resisting, yielding, and creating complex alterities: a conversation and story between two players in play. The relationship occurring within digital other is anthropomorphic, other-worldly and often haunting. The solo dancer in collaboration with media invests in a moving co-relative, co-emerging conversation where unities and fragmentations draw out many of the structures for understanding interactions. Two entities live symbiotically or become active rivals in play. They work together to distort the spatio-temporal continuities in their triangulation with audience.

3 HYBRIDS (H)

A third encounter is the hybrid, where performer and media co-emerge into a single being: the ‘Cyber Being’ or ‘Electric Body’. There is an undifferentiated relation between performer and media in their hybrid blending. A recombined form composed of human and media elements challenges the idea of human as pure, unaffected, impermeable and bounded. The ‘cyber being’ described by P3 from *GLOW* has body rhythms, weightlessness; it is gutless, able to scream, and seamless. The writer folds the body corporeal with technology into the single term ‘being’.

This being was a new kind of being, a cyber being. It was a being made of flesh and light. We know it was a being because of its body rhythms [P3,G,1].

Invoking Merleau-Ponty’s concept of *chiasm* to articulate the seamless gap between performer and media in an encounter of hybridity, a hybrid is not a mere rivalry between forms, it is a “cofunctioning” unique body “belonging to the same world” (Merleau-Ponty 1968, 215).¹⁶³ The hybrid form possesses rationality, the capacity to emote and to dream; “it” is genderless.

¹⁶³ Merleau-Ponty’s concept *chiasm* is that which “makes us belong to the same world.” It is a world that “forms its unity across impossibilities [disjointed existences] such as that of *my* world and the world of the other . . . there is not simply a for-Oneself for-the-Other antithesis, there is Being as containing all that, first as sensible Being and then as Being without restriction— —” (Merleau-Ponty 2000, 215).

4 **TRANSMORPHING (T)**

Transmorphism is an encounter of change and transformation. These encounters are forming, formed and disformed events indicating the potential within perceptual syntheses that go beyond the human, and which move towards the animal and fantastical. Perceptual images in receptivity border on the edge, slip into new forms, and push the limits of identity or stable image. Transmorphing is a transcendent movement, going beyond what is—if only momentarily—seeking new senses and meaning in the constitution of form. There are weaker transmorphisms that reaffirm humanness in their resistance of complete change: resemblance, almost replicating; and stronger movements where the form slips entirely into another form. Acute morphological shifts occur in such cases of animal kinesis “*the fish untangles the net of her captor’s flirtation*” [P4,G,8], and described through metaphor, similes and analogies. Transmorphism occurs in the human whereby their personhood is stripped: “*he moved as if he were not a person, but a body creating some state . . . Only occasionally did I sense a man, cognition, feeling*” [P4,E,2-3].

5 **ENVIRONMENT AND OTHER WORLDS (E)**

An Encounter of environment and other worlds is a source for co-generating and motivating other encounters, combining to create complex orderings organised in a contextual way: “*a bug caught in the death lights of an insect zapper*” [P1,G,1]. It is an interactive space, a familiar, fantastical place transcending stage space; it is a realm with tangible auras, sometimes with harsh edges, sometimes a fuzzy threshold. Atmosphere. There is no continuity with off-stage, all forms emerge within world, on, or inside its borders. It is a crucible for new forms, architectural, labyrinthine, a system and/or playing field, a rapidly shifting world of worlds, sometimes our nightmare. Narrative time is distinct from time consciousness and measured time. Each world carries its own time value, fragmentation and suspension: fictive past, present and future: “*she lived there behind time inside the surface of the floor*” [P4,TL,1].

6 EXPRESSING THE INNER (EI)

In this sixth encounter, the media projections externally represent our inner worlds, marking the mood, thoughts, and reflections of our existence. The invisible is lured to visibility; the inner made manifest. The invisible is “the existentials of the visible, its dimensions, its non-figurative inner framework” (Merleau-Ponty 2000, 257). In aesthetic constitution the relationship to one’s inner world is articulated as a mediatic “hinge” of the internal-external. We see what we want to see, however partial. Prompts to self-reflection by the spectator are visually expressed; queries are floated about existential freedom or constraints: how are we? What is this life? Existential reflections induced by mediatic boundaries, boxes, frames and bar codes. These representations are not about the meaning of the performance, but show what is stirred by the interactions when one’s inner life is made a theme. Mediatic supra-extensions of inner life, co-constitute thoughts, dreams, and emotions as moving patterns, lines and forces.

In the auric realm to watch the thought patterns manifest and live—do I want them back? Too bad [P2,G,5].

The aura of performance extrudes beyond the contained stage space. The external representation of the spectator-analyst’s inner world becomes a distal, though proximal experience.

Dark dreams spill like turps dissipating pigment patches to the constraints of pigments tether—the grains split from monochrome homes [P4,G,7].

When are we truly at home with ourselves?

Then we end in our unsettled sleep [P3,G,3].

The visual media behave somewhat like text spoken in a play where words and narrativised action provoke the audience to inwardly reflect. In a mediatised dance event, the visual media can also place such demands on the spectator.

Ordering of Interactive Encounters

There are thus several encounters of interaction that emerge isolated or together in a single object-event. Some encounters motivate and support transitions and complexes, while others are independently constituted. So far in this research, I have distinguished six types co-involved in a complex of relations and orderings. There are no established hierarchies between encounters, such that one dominates or the others, or is seen to be more foundational. However, in tracing the ordering of encounters from participants' texts, there are leading clues that particular patterns and sequencings of encounters may in fact repeat. I describe a few of these movements below.

To identify that an ordering or sequencing repeats under specific conditions with certain structural outcomes remains continuous with the orientation of my research towards praxis: to consider how a dramaturgy of digital performance is possible. As a procedure, each encounter could be mapped in relation to their genesis, ascertaining if a particular order entails a particular result. To date there are not enough examples from my *Poetics of Reception Project* to pursue such a mapping—the project never intended such an outcome. For the moment, we can describe an ordering of encounters at a first and second level. From these levels a complete transitional movement of one encounter into a different one occurs; and/or the creation of a complex whereby the prior encounter remains residually to combine with others. Together, they comprise a new complex.

A first-level ordering:

(i) Transitional: (1) Transmorphism → environment

Amoeba, Escher world—fall into the black vertigo [P2,E,1].

The stage space is abstracted and abstracting, like the artist Maurits Cornelis Escher's world of infinite perspectives: falling down the walls and stairs, teetering on the edge, dimensional depths indicating vertigo.

(2) Digital Touch → Hybrid

The shape, the silhouette, boldy traced with a white light. The background now dark. The body unfurls, folds, rolls over, limbs spoking. An emission of light shooting out from the living core—the electric body [P1,G,1].

The silhouette of the performer is traced with white light; it is a case of double supra-extension, first seen as a silhouette of the body, and second as a tracing of that silhouette with light. There is an acute descriptive focus upon the body as the media fade. There is a transition from one mode of digital touch (supraextension) to a second mode of penetration when the hybrid “electric body” forms.

(ii) Complex: (1) Digital Touch + environment

The Other’s world his to investigate [P2,E,2].

This is a moment where the performer has moved into the projected digital double, fitting inside smoothly like a glove. The writer identifies a different world for the performer from inside this replicated skin. It is an unsettling place; the writer identifies relaxation and rest once the performer is no longer possessed by their digital double.

Settle back in skin—relax and rest in self [P2,E,2].

Accept that self, resting smaller and quieter [P2,E,3].

(2) Environment + Transmorphism

Laser line hit white effervescent glow when rolling out the measure one in folds of white, snow dropped depression in snows, roll, land, arcs, line glacial bunny snow [CI,G,1].

(3) Transmorphism + Environment

A bug caught in a the death lights of an insect zapper [P1,G,1].

(4) Environment + Expressing the Inner

Down the deep dark hole of the self [P3,G,3].

A second-level ordering:

(iii) Transitional: There were no examples of a transition at a second-level ordering

(iv) Complex: Transmorphism + Environment + Digital Other

The fish untangles the net of her captor’s flirtation [P4,G,7].

The dancer, now a fish caught in a mediatic net, the captor.

The phenomenology so far undertaken in the *Poetics of Reception Project* has revealed a number of constitutive structures and related modes of interactions, which are inexhaustible, dynamic and descriptive. In the following pages, I discuss eight such structures disclosed from participants' descriptions of the aforementioned encounters. There is no particular order to these structures, and so the following must not be understood in linear terms. These structures never operate independently, but overlap in complex relationships. For the purposes of clarity in communication, I consider each independently with a presupposed interdependency. In clarifying and elaborating upon each structure and relative modes, their overlapping connections make it difficult to categorise them neatly under appropriate headings. I have attempted to organise examples and insights in a manner that best elucidates the phenomenon of interaction. For the sake of brevity, I present only the most relevant findings and examples and not the entire analysis. The eight constitutive structures to be discussed include:

- (1) **The Relational Structure of Action: acting upon—acted upon**
- (2) **Dimensional Conversion Types in Receptivity of Encounters**
- (3) **Belief Structure: the 'Suspension of Disbelief'. Loss of mode of certainty and limits of identity**
- (4) **Identity—Presence Structures**
- (5) **Language of Description: (a) The Grammar of Interactions (b) Negative and Positive Valences**
- (6) **Orientation: embodiment in receptivity**
- (7) **Transcendent Movement: potential to go beyond the human form and stage space; perceptual possibilities**
- (8) **Receptive Empathy: (a) The Role of Audience (b) The *For-Us* structure of audience: affirming the triangulation of experience in the co-constitution of the relation**

(1) **The Relational Structure of Action: Acting Upon—Acted Upon**

A relational structure of action, ‘acting upon—acted upon’, is always operating within interactions. What seems most basic and shared across the six encounters identified is a structure of responsive action with multi-vocal directions and intensities. Of the six encounters, digital other is foremost relational and is indicated across all the modes of relational action. The hybrid formation of performer and media into a singular being on the other hand, resists all modes of the relational structure except for ambiguity. In hybridity, the relation between media and performer is paradoxical. The relation between one and the other dissolves in the absolute and transcendent union of two forms. They digest each other.

The following section outlines three modes of relational action elicited from the descriptions of encounters: reciprocal, ambiguous, and one-sided directed. From these, further distinctive modes are identified to include permeability and neutrality.

Three Modes in a Relational Structure of Action

MODE 1: RECIPROCAL

Reciprocity implies that body and media have equal importance. A symbiotic relation may be indicated where both are independently working together in a synthesis of aesthetic formation. The direction of acting upon—acted upon on both sides is differentiated in terms of action, but may appear undifferentiated.

The externally imposed lines. Lines she created for herself. Both undifferentiated. Having the equal importance and visibility [P2,G,8].

There is a relation of responsiveness. Either media or body resists or reacts to the other, recognising and accepting reciprocities of action. They are together. Togetherness is an aspect of responsive reciprocity, implying openness toward the other, resisting and or reacting in this duet.

Always together. Haunting her. Absorbing her. Resisting, reacting [CI,G,3].

In Digital Touch, the mode of permeability demonstrates this reciprocal relational structure of action. Permeability describes the moving, porous boundaries and interstitial play occurring within thresholds constituted between the skin of body and skin of media, especially in the

object-event of digital doubling. Permeability indicates a direction and intention of forces in meaningful play.

Media into body: “ <i>absorbs</i> ”	Acceptance by the acted-upon
Media <i>with</i> body: “ <i>blending</i> ”	A mutual meeting of dimensions

In Digital Other, equanimity results in a reciprocity of play between media and performer. In these instances the media element is constituted as other. In recognition of alterity the media is anthropomorphised with personhood.

They are play. They intend to have each other, but will any succeed in its belief in each other [P3,E,1]?

As players in play both trapped in a game dynamic, the media is constituted to have intentionality with a corresponding and operating belief and value system. Reciprocity here is non-instrumental. Instrumentality implies that one player becomes the tool of the other (see below). Instead, they are:

All pulses and impulses. They buzz each other [P3,E,1].

In Expressing the Inner, the existential is made visible in the constitution of an externalising transcendent media. This is an encounter that emphasises triangulation and the constituting experiences of the spectator-analyst, where reflections on their life, thinking, dreaming, and existence is aesthetically constituted.

Caught in the matrix—do I really know the patterns I create [P2,G,4]?

Who is acting upon whom? It appears there is a reciprocal action of spectator acting upon media as much as the media provides the experience of being existentially trapped.

I've drawn my own box [P2,G,7].

The triangulation does extend to involve the performer in the spectator-analyst's recognition of a similar condition of reciprocity in action with media:

Because I am trapped in my black box watching them play in their black box. I wonder if I can escape by falling asleep, but I am trapped in the black box of my mind and cannot [P3,E,2].

Reciprocity can involve instrumentality where either media or performer is taken as a tool. This does not preclude responsivity:

Not once was he dancing, this body was a tool. Clearly responsive [P4,E,7].

The body becomes a brush, tracing inky impressions on the floor [P1,G,4].

MODE 2: AMBIGUOUS

Ambiguity results when the ‘acting upon—acted upon’ relation is undifferentiated. The origin of direction and intention is difficult to identify.

Purple haze lines envelop directed by limbs carrying the weight--who directs who [CI,G,2]?

The encounter hybrid draws out the ambiguous mode of the relational action. A hybrid is a co-emergence of forms into a singular being that co-functions in a *chiasmatic* flow. Co-dependent responsiveness ensues, but points of initiation in action are indeterminable.

It moved in time with itself—the light and the pattern and the arm and foot extend in mood swings [P3, G, 1].

The recombination of parts are constituted synchronously—conjoined to move “in time with itself”.

In the mode of permeability, the movement of media into body is expressed ambiguously within Digital Touch as:

Media into body: “*inflow*”

Penetration that is not one of acting upon

Arises out of ambiguity

In an encounter of transmorphisms, where performer and/or media becomes something else entirely because of the interaction (note that transmorphisms can also occur outside of the interaction between body and technology), there is no relational structure of action unless there is a transitional movement at either a first-level complex: (i) transmorphisms + digital other: the human form changes into an animal or insect and enters a relation with the media;

or second-level complex (ii) transmorphism + environment + digital other: *The fish untangles the net of her captor's flirtation* [P4,G,7].

MODE 3: ONE-SIDED DIRECTED

A one-sided directed relation is when the action of one player is unilaterally directed upon the other. When media acts upon the body, the performer's humanness and/or corporeality is brought into greater relief.

Black globules encroach, hunting, sucking her, drawing, tension, entrapped, engulfed. Spine laid out for all to see [CI,G,5].

White clean lines shifting, pushing away candles alive [CI,G,5].

When the performer acts upon the media: *pushing out the white line* [P2,G,1], the relational structure of action highlights a second structure of *dimensional conversion* (see (2) below).

In a mode of permeability within Digital Touch, action as one-sided directed is expressed in movements of:

Media into body: "ooze in"	Penetration by the acting-upon, inward
Body out of media: "pop out of"	Explosive outward movement penetrating boundary/membrane of media

In a mode of neutrality, the movement of:

The committed string-fish your bleeding fathom [P4,G,6].

Media out of body: "bleeds"	One-sided directed, but not intentional in force
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The demons are now beneath inky her dribbled out [CI,G,6].

Media out of body: "dribbled out"	The body leaks
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Deeper etchings of a black line. Laying still embolden embossed [CI,G,4].

Media on body: "etchings"	The media etches
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The body becomes embossed with a graphic quality

In interactions of Digital Other, a one-sided directed relation manifests typically on the side of media as specter, predator, puppeteer (“The God of mediatisation” [CI,G,2]) and/or possessor. The media may be constituted as being a spirit-like entity with a visible aura; or experienced as possessing corporeal qualities: weight, density, having the capacity to touch, and in itself tangible.

Zapped by all the imprints that flow back to haunt—the karma of auric traces [P2,G,3].

(2) **Dimensional Conversion Types in Receptivity of Encounters**

There are three dimensional conversion types. The dimensions are spatial and temporal in nature. They indicate conversions between 2-dimensional spatial surfaces and corresponding light and image based projections; 3-dimensional volumetric objects, and the temporal dimensions of consciousness within audience reception: memories, imaginings and image formations. The dimensional aspect of audience reception of the different interactions between bodies and technologies was identified in the Mixed Reality Project in Chapter 6. The following general formulation was abstracted:

PRESENTATION = DIMENSIONAL FORMS; RECEPTION = [DIMENSIONAL RECEPTIVITY Genealogy of Screen Mediations] (AUDIENCE RECEPTION (non)Live/(non)Mediatised)

As a result of my textual analysis, it can be shown that the dimensional activity in audience reception of interactions transcends the genealogy of mediations traced prior to an experience of the research-based projects discussed in Chapter 6. It is now possible to expand upon the dimensional activity of audience reception to include three distinct dimensional conversion types. These conversions shift in time with new forms constituted in perception of the performance. The general formulation now reads to include possible dimensional conversions of a spatial or temporal nature:

PRESENTATION=DIMENSIONAL FORM; DIMENSIONAL RECEPTIVITY (GENEALOGY '+') AUDIENCE RECEPTION: MEDIATISED/NON-MEDIATISED/LIVE/NON-LIVE; **DIMENSIONAL CONVERSION TYPES**

Conversion Type 1: 3-dimensions converting to 2-dimensions (spatial)

The body takes on a graphic quality through the interaction

Deeper etchings of a black line. Laying still embolden embossed [CI,G,4].

The body is still and takes on a 2D graphic materiality “embossed” by the etchings of a black line. The body is brought into relief in a graphic way. The action is one-sided, directed on the body by the media.

Conversion Type 2: 2-dimensions converting to 3-dimensions (spatial)

- (i) The media is an environment or digital other that promotes the corporeal body to resist or be resisted, to push or be pushed, to be held, penetrated, and imprinted. The media no longer has a spectral projected quality, but is constituted with materiality, corporeality and density. It presents a play of forces: attracting and repelling. In the action of responsivity (Digital Other) 2-dimensions are converted into three. The lines are perceived as weighted with the capacity to be pushed.

Pushing out the white line [P2,G,1].

- (ii) The media becomes *wearable* in an encounter of digital touch. The moving body gives the impression that it bears some kind of weight or resistance from the media, pushing, pulling, or yielding. The body behaves as though it wears something with volume, density, weight and force.

She yelps with quavering voice downward and upward—off the floor from beneath the lines masking, face masks [CI,G,1].

I think of the grid as a cross on his body [P4,E,6].

- (iii) This type of conversion (2D→3D) can be found in cases of ‘digital violence’ perpetrated by the media on the performer (encounters DT and DO), such that the performer becomes vulnerable, visibly retreats, fights to escape, audibly yells, and/or demonstrates fear and pain. The performer is constituted as experiencing a physical threat from the media which could affect their body in a direct way.

Black globules encroach, hunting, sucking her, drawing her, tension, entrapped, engulfed [CI,G,5].

They morph and ooze back into her standing body. The shriek of re-entry is piercing, the dancer’s voice and music warping together. This repeats. There is no escape [P1,G,4].

Always together, haunting her, absorbing her, resisting, reacting [P1,G,1].

- (iv) Environments and worlds take on the materiality of an everyday or fantasised world through transference, offering spatial depth.

A crucible, cradle. Out of which spew exalted, exultant forms [P1,G,6].

Amoeba, Escher world—fall into the black vertigo [P2,E,1].

Conversion Type 3: Temporalising 2-dimensions and 3-dimensions

The co-extension of two dimensions and three to express an emotional/psychological state.

It moved in time with itself—the light and the pattern and the arm and foot extend in mood swings [P3,G,1].

Co-emergence of media and body into a single hybrid being expresses the inner form. There is a unitary swing; the dimensions collapse to constitute a mood. The “mood swing”, a 2-dimensional pattern and 3-dimensional limb draws together the gestural and emotional.

Movement of dimensional conversions in the transition of encounters

Accompanying a transition of encounters is a transition in dimensional conversions. For example, in the performance *Érection* the digital doubling occurs first as an encounter of digital other. The performer stands next to their holographic other: the other as replicated self. The dimensional conversion is of 2 dimensions becoming 3. The digital double occupies space with volume proportionate to the scale of the performer. It is his absolute mirror image in 3-dimensions. As the performer steps into their digital double, an encounter of digital touch occurs (possession and permeability), the dimensions of media constituted in digital other as 3-dimensions converts to two to permit the penetration of this holographic other by the performer.

(3) **Belief Structure: the ‘Suspension of Disbelief’. Loss of mode of certainty and limits of identity**

What remains constant across the various encounters within aesthetic play is a ‘suspension of disbelief’. This is a momentary ‘belief’ to no longer ‘disbelieve’ an illusion or the impossible, and is determinately a structural invariant of interactions identified from the experience of encounters presented here. A reinforcement of the belief to ‘suspend disbelief’ is a necessary condition for the interaction of hybridity (to take one encounter as an example): to see the angel; the genderless cyber being; or the electric body, the perceiver assents readily to a *loss of mode of certainty* about the dancing body being lit by a projection in a certain way. A belief to no longer disbelieve permits the truth of representation; it is essential to constituting meaningful interactions.

In 1807, the Romantic poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge coined the phrase *a willing suspension of disbelief*. The phrase described the way in which a reader of poetry consciously suspended reality to construct a world of make-believe. In a letter to Daniel Stuart, dated from 1816, Coleridge draws an experiential distinction between dreaming and the illusions we willingly and voluntarily constitute in experiences of art, including the stage.

It is not strictly accurate to say, that we believe our dreams to be actual while we are dreaming. We neither believe it nor disbelieve it—with the will, the *comparing power is suspended* [italics added by Ferri], and without any comparing power, any act of Judgment, whether affirmation or denial, is impossible. The forms & thoughts act merely by their own inherent power: and the strong feelings at times apparently connected with them are in fact sensations, which are the causes or occasions of the images, not (as when we are awake) the effects of them. Add to this a *voluntary Lending of the will to this suspension of one of its own operations* (i.e. that of the comparison and consequent decision concerning the reality of any sensuous impression) and you have the true Theory of Stage Illusion (Coleridge, 1816 in Griggs 1959, pp. 641 – 642 in Ferri, 2007, italics added by Ferri).

The film theorist Anthony J. Ferri attempts to retrieve the original meaning of Coleridge’s concept “poetic faith” from previous scholarship that has, in Ferri’s eyes, moved away from its original intended meaning. In order to examine receptivity in film audiences, Ferri objects to perspectives that view a willing suspension of disbelief as involving some “loss of normal consciousness”.

Scholars presume that readers, viewers, or listeners of a creative work must engage in some unique leap into the work itself. The willing suspension of disbelief represents a process of senses (cognitions) and imagination (artistic) that occur between an individual and a creative work (film, poem, novel) in which the reader, viewer, or listener cognitively engages and experiences the work (Ferri 2007, x).

Ferri's position is akin to my identification of the suspension of disbelief as a unique kind of belief structure in the receptivity of new media interactions. There is no loss of 'normal' consciousness (whatever normal means here), but a different style of synthesis occurring within consciousness, and as a crucial aspect of it. Believing to disbelieve is a passive—active giving over to the trick of interaction, allowing the illusion to seek its optimum and necessary fulfillment as illusory. To cooperate with the trick, the illusion as intended, or the experience of one's embodied imaginings resists the call for transparency—the 'how does it work?' or 'what is behind the curtain?' type of interrogations—and the active tracing by audience to comprehend causal origins. Not all interactions require this belief structure, especially in encounters with a digital other where the media and performer body are co-relatively symbiotic and do not manifest new forms.

The belief act of suspending disbelief supports the generation of new perceptual possibilities. If all we see is a moving body lit by projections, and not a "fish caught in their captor's net", we are deprived of poetic faith. We are not motivated by our imaginations, nor able to stir the deeper perceptual structures and associations that enable us to encounter and engage with new perceptions. The commitment to the suspension of disbelief varies across accounts. Some participants teeter on the edges, vacillating between describing the interactions with transparency, sticking to detailed descriptions of the body, or entering a state of self-reflexivity: announcing moments of surprise, joy and satisfaction when they finally believe to disbelieve.

I'm blinking and straining and trying to understand what I'm seeing. I like this feeling. Its clever its something new [P4,E,6].

There are two aspects to this belief structure. The first is the 'Loss of Mode of Certainty'; and the second, an 'Identity Limit'.

Loss of Mode of Certainty

Here I draw on Husserl's modalising description of certainty. Certainty is pure certainty; its purity or absoluteness is characterised by the sole fact that something speaks *only* in favour of it. Certainty is also "impure certainty". Taken non-pejoratively, impure certainty points to potential "leeways of possibilities" that entice us away from only speaking in favour of one thing such as the predicted outcome of an event ("the raised hammer will fall"); or an unequivocal judgment (or conviction) where I can not speak or be enticed any other way: "I am conscious of only one possibility" (Husserl 2001, 85-7). The phrase *loss of mode of certainty* relates to impure certainty, an encounter that could be experienced and otherwise described (modalisation). It is revealed as a positive and affirming dimension of interaction within reception, without which, the performer constituted as slipping into other forms would not be possible.

The slip into other forms. Pushing the boundary of that potential [P1,G,2].

Transmorphism is a changing movement between forms that function always with this modalised sense of certainty. Definite forms are always, and positively, open to the possibility of that which they are not. In the aesthetic realm, interactions of morphological change rarely remain certain, even if there is an imperative (quest) for stability.

This quest for form and definition underpinned by the oscillating light, projected from above [P1,G,2].

Identity Limit

Each emerging encounter undergoes an identity limit; they form, then disform, either in a full transitional movement, or as a relational complex (see pages 232-233). They are continually and dynamically on the verge or edge of becoming something else.¹⁶⁴ Identity limits are sharpest and operate more rapidly in hybrids and transmorphic forms, but are found in other encounters to varying degrees. The identity limit is a function of receptivity and comes into play through the belief structure of suspending disbelief. For example, a leg moving in a flicking motion initially perceived in primary impression is described as a

¹⁶⁴ An identity limit has already been discussed in this chapter (pp. 220-222); however, I elaborate it differently here in relation to a belief structure.

flicking leg, but as soon as the belief structure of disbelief comes into play, the constituting perceiver finds an identity limit with the performer form, and thus the leg becomes *something else*. No longer is it ‘just’ a leg moving; the leg is perceived as a flicking tail.

The belief-structure is an essential feature of receptivity in aesthetic experiences. The maker of performance can only hope to promote poetic faith in audiences of the work that they create; this is also true for intense realist and minimalist forms of theatre. But the movement of suspension is largely on the side of the perceiver. If they do not wish to believe, then they will hover uncommitted on the edges of a belief to disbelieve.

To evidence this point, I noticed weaker and stronger versions of transmorphism across accounts. The weaker version is a case of *almost replicating*: an on the verge of almost being *like* something else. Trembling on the edge of a limit identity, P4 conservatively grapples with this movement of suspension.

*Earlier in the work, he rolled around on his head, **almost replicating** some rap dancer move. I thought about the suit, his costume and the stripes down the side and his sneakers, and about the urban reference. Head tucked under, he began to move in a relaxed shoulder stand, bent arms initiating the movement across the floor, **resembling some morphed body** with no head and feet in the air [P4,E,3].*

The participant astutely records their experience of transitioning from this weaker version of transmorphism: the dancer is “almost replicating” some other identity (still human), to a stronger one, *resemblance*: it then resembles “some morphed body” (vaguely human). This movement heralds a complete shift of identity limit, a *transformation* into something else. The belief of the suspension of disbelief fulfilled.

*Many of these **movements morphed the body into shapes that somehow changed the body into something else**. Only occasionally did I sense a man, cognition [P4,E,3].*

Changes occur on the side of the media or the performer. It is unlike a fusion forming hybrids. The immediate perception of a projected image or line, or of the performer as fleshly corporeal figure will transform with an identity limit, becoming something else: performer now as animal or insect; media as ectoplasm, inky cloud. It is a process of forming and disforming, a radical process of becoming.

To resist transmorphic transitions is to reaffirm a certainty in constituting the human form. As a result the moving body is made prominent.

*Play of balance—stretching out stick figure is **still human**. Fluid jump joy of Being caught at the moment, time and time again, the trick of it [P2,E,1]*

In this resistance, the moving body is described in great detail

By points—ordered regular blinking . . . he jumps bounds the surface enlargens—widens he is unbounded, looking toward us. We can only see in staccato lights—fluoro charm sincere moving us taking us out of bounds but only for a moment. Thoughts so strong on man moving [CI,E,2].

A transmorphing movement from human form to animal form is a stronger version of this encounter, but not as strong as constituting the human form as some fantastical creature, or inanimate thing (“candle alive”) far from the human form. From my analyses it appears that a transmorphing movement into animal is an easier perception to digest in reception, and more readily found in accounts.

Allowing the animal all fours graceful and easy query [P2,E,4].

Animal kinesis is where the form (media or performer) is described as a moving animal within some environment. The phenomena are expressed in written reception through metaphors, similes and analogies. Take for instance the morphological shift in this block of description:

The fish untangles the net of her captor’s flirtation, - entranced in the tangle of rhythm as neons follow one’s every movement, the gaze of darkness spills as ink blots out the sun with dark butterflies and the illuminated weaving of moths [P4,G,8].

The moving shape is a fish. It is a fish only in relation to the projected media lines, which constitute a net. Within the same sentence the net becomes darkness, it gazes, now an ameobic mass; then suddenly, it breaks up into dark butterflies eclipsing the light, juxtaposed with an illuminating weave of moths. This image complex demonstrates rolling transmorphisms, where the limit identity of each form is rapidly reached to quickly become something else.

A number of questions are raised in the disclosure of this belief structure, questions that are difficult to answer in this current study, but still useful to ask: what are the limits to perceptual possibility in mediatised performance contexts? Is it a case of limits in human perception: a deprivation in reception? Do we look for recognisable forms, forms that we can understand? Or is it a fault in the design of interactions that fail to provoke the essential belief structure?

So much living potential, the electric potential of these organisms, of which humans are only one form. The slip into other forms. Pushing the boundary of that potential—This quest for form and definition underpinned by the oscillating light, projected from above [P1,G,2].

What is the receptive potential for interactions to generate more complex forms and images like Carol Brown's creatures of code? (Brown 2006, 86) Are there reconfigurations of form through the imagination that our perceptual apparatus cannot cope with? Does perception, and/or the phenomenological attitude bridle the potential for complex figurations? My analysis here seems to suggest a phenomenological limit. In facing this limit, we are turned to expect a greater horizon of possibility.

Imagining an animal when seeing a performer crouched and walking on all fours is not an extreme departure from the human form, it is an "easy query".

An organic form on the frame of pure white, folded over, crawling at a slow pace—animal or human—crawling, no trawling, along the grid from left to right [P1,G,1].

Susan Broadhurst evokes Lyotard's concept of the *figural* to describe visual forms in digital art that expand our perceptual possibilities. Indeed, the *figural* are "illusive" and "evocative" elements that "present the unrepresentable", conducive to a realm where art defies meaning and representation (Broadhurst 2006, 23-26). Broadhurst also considers neurobiological research on brain behaviour that demonstrates the brain's plasticity and interaction in art experiences. Both the brain, with its capacity to fire and wire new neural pathways, and Lyotard's *figural* highlight the capacity for expanding and changing our perceptual structures in digital art experiences. Without needing to show how synapses fire—or capitulating to some unknowable realm saturated with a phenomenality only disclosed through neologisms—my phenomenological analysis of participants' writings demonstrates how complex aesthetic experiences broaden our perceptual possibilities in terms of belief (disbelief) and imagination.

(4) Identity—Presence Structure

I understand presence within receptivity to be the perceptual synthetic process of *affection* and *attention*. In presence, objects come to prominence by calling upon our attention from within our perceptual field of rivaling prominences. Presence is the play and force of affection (*affective allure* from the object on the subject), and responsive attention from the subject who yields to affection.¹⁶⁵ Positing presence as an activity in perceptual synthesis, occurring between the affective allure of a given object and an active turning towards by the subject, resists modernist notions of performer presence as an instantiated one-sided metaphysical property or quality such as *charisma* (see Grotowski 1968, Chaikin 1972). Moreover, presence understood as affection and attention in perceptual synthesis further resists deconstructive critiques of a *metaphysics of presence* that has dominated Performance Studies over several decades (see Auslander 1997, Derrida 1976, and Goodall 2008).

Presence is a constitutive-duet, or more accurately, a constitutive-trio within the triangulation of performance. In an interactive encounter a form may present with a *coherency in presence*, whereby body and media participate to create a unified world. Rather than viewing this unified world as a homogenous whole, all elements are heterogeneously and coherently at play. However, an *incoherency in presence* may occur, such that forms are dull to our senses, affecting a somewhat vague allure on our attentions. Incoherency may also result when there is an *imbalance in presence* between the performer and media, but is not the one-sided directed mode of relational action that functions with a coherent presence. Incoherency due to imbalance occurs when one player inhibits or dominates the other, or restricts play within interaction. Such an imbalance may be attributed to a negligence by the performance maker/s in their scripting of interactions between bodies and media. In digital interactions, the presence of forms within receptivity is the process of affection and attention. Presence exposes distinctive *identity* structures (A-E) fundamental to all encounters and are abstractly revealed as: ONE as TWO; ONE of TWO; ONE of THREE; ONE of ONE; TWO of ONE.

¹⁶⁵ By affective force, I mean, a tendency directed toward the ego, a tendency where the reaction is responsive [*antwoertende Tätigkeit*] on the part of the ego. That is, in yielding to the affection—in other words, by being “motivated”—the ego takes up an endorsing position; it decides actively for what is enticing, and does so in the mode of subjective certainty (Husserl 2001, 91).

ONE is to the exclusion of all else. ONE is togetherness, a bond of two or three. ONE world. ONE image. P3 playfully alludes to the identity-presence structure in their constitution of a hybrid interaction:

The task of one being to suspend to another being begins now [P3,G,1].

To be at one with the technology, or at two? To be or not 'two' be? [P3, G1,3]

The following distinctions further elaborate the six encounters in terms of identity and presence:

STRUCTURE A: ONE as TWO (Hybrids)

The ONE form is a combined force of TWO, such that the TWO are still present to each other in the singular form. Use of the adverb 'as' indicates that both are equally fused in the resulting formation.

P1 sees an angel:

A crucible, cradle. Out of which spew exalted, exultant forms. Am I Angel? Find me in the inky black [P1,G,6].

This bears the identity structure of ONE as TWO: ONE image of an angel, to the exclusion of all else. The performer moves their arms in an extended flapping motion, hands meeting above their head, and returning to their side, tracing out black inky patterns; the wings of an angel. There is a coherency of presence for this combination of performer and media to be at one with each other, move as one together and present no spatio-temporal gap.

Do we take the seamless apart? Does it tear itself apart? Are we able to see it apart and together at the same time? [P3,G,3]

There is no 'here', 'there' separation; both are 'here-there' together.

STRUCTURE B: ONE of TWO (Transmorphing + Digital Other)

ONE of TWO is a coherency of dual presences in the forming of ONE form, being, or relation. Unlike the hybrid, the performer and media are concomitant in being something else entirely (transmorphism), or are two independent entities within a relation (digital other). The use of the preposition ‘of’ denotes a derivation of the original source, ‘one of two’.

The following analysis focuses upon the televisual experience of *GLOW* described by P4. Despite their difficulties in experiencing the content of the interaction, some interesting aspects of the identity-presence structure ONE of TWO are revealed.

Focus to locus, locution of frame pixels and life good if eyes read by decay of lit icons [P4,G,2-3].

P4’s locus of focus is the pixel. They suggest that: “life is good” if “eyes read by decay”. The way we watch television is a process of pixel decay and disappearance.¹⁶⁶ So far P4’s descriptions only focus upon their televisual reception. They indicate that this mediation is an impoverished experience of the true content—the live body interacting with projected media. The televisual’s *pixel pixies* rob this experience, rendering it oblique along with other framing features like the floor, walls, camera lens, and their eyes:

Then now it is frame, floor is oblique for frame is as frame, as does lens, framed by wall, eyes lens aim by frame [P4,G,1].

So far the media projections described by other participants (grid lines, patterns, amoebic form) have not been mentioned. The participant is overcome by the fragmented presencing of many frames. A coherency of presence in relation to the intended interaction on stage is lost through layers of mediation. Thinking about this in relation to my experience of bodies dancing with projected avatars on a background screen in the Mixed Reality Project, it seems that the coherent presence of bodies with avatars, creating and inhabiting a mytho-poetic world, required the reception to be mediated and framed by the viewfinder. I am not sure if displayed on a field monitor, computer screen, or television—as a further string of mediations in receptivity—the same experience or coherency, of dual presences forming one world, would have occurred. In the overall cycle of production, the point of reception for me was

¹⁶⁶ For Sean Cubitt "the broadcast flow is . . . a vanishing, a constant disappearing of what has just been shown" (Cubitt in Auslander 1999, 43).

early-stage research as opposed to performance. However, on viewing a live production of the Mixed Reality Project in a small theatre in Sydney, there was still no coherency of presence between the dancing bodies and screened avatars. As an audience member, I selected to watch either the dancers on stage or switched to watch the screen presentation of avatars edited into motion animation. The hoped and intended for ONE of TWO identity-presence structure in the interaction between live dancers and screened image was a case of incoherent presence, establishing instead a TWO by TWO identity-presence structure.

Investigating the identity-presence structure through these two examples of incoherent presence raises the following propositions as to the intention and efficacy of working with dancers and screen projections. How is ‘one world of two’ and/or ‘one relation as two’ achieved in the interactions between media and bodies? Such an investigation from within reception can assist dramaturgical decisions when specifically staging bodies alongside screened media:

- If the intention is to create one world of two (like the Mixed Reality Project intended when staged as a live, mediated event), then a coherency of presence in reception will be fulfilled if the interaction is filmed and presented cinematically.
- *Monumental*, a dance piece by Australian artists Ros Warby and Margie Medlin, created within my experience a coherent identity-presence structure of ‘one consciousness’: ONE of TWO. This was accomplished through careful decisions about spatial scale and positioning (body, costume, screen, image, and lighting).

*We see her reverie; feel the kinesis, shape, textural weave of light, fabric, black, white navy tone. One.*¹⁶⁷

- From P4’s live-televisual experience, it seems that the interaction was lost to the forces of the pixel. The reception for *Glow* needed to be unmediated by screens. Interestingly, Chunky Move’s second interactive production, *Mortal Engine*, was more coherently presented as promotional footage in a YouTube

¹⁶⁷ My notes from *Monumental* Ros Warby and Margie Medlin, Presented by Performance Space, Carriageworks, Sydney, 21 February 2009.

clip, rather than as a live, mediated presentation.¹⁶⁸ The work had been filmed at a 45-degree angle from overhead, with close-up shots of the dancers, and sections of their bodies at crucial moments of interaction. My live reception of the performance was largely impoverished due to the constraints of the auditorium: a proscenium stage with seating that made it impossible to see the bodies on stage and interactions with the media.¹⁶⁹ For the most part, I was audience to a laser light, sound show. Audience sight-lines were given little consideration when staging this production, an unfortunate omission that dance technology makers (and/or producers) should pay attention to.

A digital other encounter between media and performer is often constituted in terms of a struggle or tension needing resolution. It provides the necessary elements for a dialogic, dialectic, and interpersonal dynamic in what would otherwise be experienced as a solo performer dancing alongside projected light. An encounter of digital other with the identity-presence structure ONE of TWO never seals the body and media in a static relation. They transition into a different encounter, or become part of a complex.

Always together . . . or never apart or white clean lines shifting pushing away candle alive
[CI,G,5].

The media is responsible for pushing the performer away; in this push from digital other a transmorphing occurs where the performer, seen with “spine laid out”, becomes a “candle alive”. She glows. She becomes an inanimate thing, not animal, as many other instances of transmorphing forms.

¹⁶⁸ See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sbjOMualLVs>

¹⁶⁹ *Mortal Engine*, Gideon Orbarzanek and Frieder Weiss, Sydney Festival, Drama Theatre, Sydney Opera House, 19 January 2008.

STRUCTURE C: ONE of THREE (environment)

The light and the man and the box are all pulses and impulses. They buzz each other. They are static. They are random. They are play. They intend to have each other, but will any succeed in its belief in each other. They are trapped in the game of each other [P3,E,1].

A ONE of THREE identity-presence structure is the extension of coherency to a greater complex of players co-creating some world or environment: the fish in the net; the bunny in the snow; the man, the light, the box trapped in a “*game of each other . . . a binary system*” [P3,E,1-2].

STRUCTURE D: ONE of ONE (digital touch in digital double)

An interaction of digital touch involving digital doubling is a movement of possession (body enters media or media enters body) and has an identity-presence structure of ONE of ONE: the possession fits like a glove.

Later the possession takes over . . . They morph and ooze back into her standing body. The shriek of re-entry is piercing, the dancers voice and music warping together. This repeats. There is no escape [P1,G,4].

In a different description of possession in digital doubling:

The Helix . . . The H Skeleton of technology—taking over the body of senses—sliding into the second skin pop out of the physical form [P2,E,2].

The performer’s “body of senses” is taken over: a power over the body ‘acted upon’ by the technology. The movement of possession is unusually reversed. The performer enters the digital double—as we understand normal possession to operate—but it is the performer’s senses that are radically taken over in this occupation. The helix is a spiral. The metaphor meaningfully works in two ways: first, it anthropomorphically describes the inner scaffolding (skeleton) of the media as possessor at a deep level (DNA of media); and second, it moves like a spiral to take over the body.

STRUCTURE E: TWO of ONE (digital other of digital doubling)

A second identity-presence structure and encounter can be identified in this peculiar case of digital doubling. The whole movement begins as an encounter of digital other: the performer stands next to a replicated holographic projection of themselves, then, the performer enters their image (digital touch), is taken over in this possession (fits like a glove), and then “pops out” to reform this identical relation of digital other (digital double). The possession (ONE of ONE) ceases, and a TWO of ONE identity is re-constituted until the replicated media fades.

Taking over the body of senses—sliding into the second skin (digital touch ONE of ONE) pop out of the physical form. The other’s world his to investigate. Settle back into skin—relax and rest in self [P2,E,2].

(5) Language of Description: (a) The Grammar of Interactions (b) Negative and Positive Valences

In Chapter 4, I considered the conceptual relation *embodiment—embodied imaginings—language of embodiment*. This relation helped me to increase awareness of the role of embodiment in the receptivity of the spectator-analyst who actively co-constitutes the object-event. Identifying this relation was especially useful in the final workshops. During analysis, what was most striking about the language of embodiment at a structural level in participants' textual descriptions was the unstable use of pronouns to describe the media, performer, and themselves as audience members (amongst other audience members). The following *grammar of interactions* informs, indicates and reinforces structural patterns across the various texts, and helps to disclose, with deeper elaboration, other aspects of encounters. The use of language at an intuitive grammatical level is significant in the identity and expression of the movement of constituted forms. Grammar rules were not necessarily followed in descriptions and were never encouraged. Participants shared language, but the formal rules of English grammar were not always observed in their poetics. The *Poetics of Reception Project* attempts to evoke an embodied language specific to the unique experiences of interactions. The following analysis starts from the formal rules of language, and departs where descriptions structurally disclose something different in the identification and indication of new forms and relations.

(5a) The Grammar of Interactions

Subjective personal pronoun

- (i) 'I' of audience member/ spectator-analyst

I want to do that – I want to be able to do the splits [P2, G, 2].

Receptive Empathy (kinesthetic): identifying with our own body and bodily capabilities through the movement of the performer: 'I think'; 'I feel this subject'; it is an intercorporeal expression. What kind of authority to experience is claimed here? The 'I' telescopes out from the particular to the general. The general 'I' denotes the encounter as abstract.

- (ii) 'I' The 'I-conflation': spectator-analyst identifying with performer

Receptive Empathy at a kinesthetic and emotional level as:

Hybrid: *Up there—I don't want to go up there. Bad things happen [PI,G, 6].*

Digital Other: *I feel fear, real terror with sound [CI,G,2].*

- (iii) 'she' The spectator-analyst referring to the performer in experiences of receptive empathy as:

Digital Other: *She feels back body [P1,G,7].*

When no interaction occurs (on the side of performer):

Why does she need to talk—mutter [P2,G,1].

She's got it hard—she has to do it but it looks satisfying [P2,G,2].

- (iv) 'we' Indicates inclusiveness of all audience members by spectator-analyst sharing in the experience of watching the performance in an encounter of:

Digital Other: *How perfect we can make it appear [CI,G,6].*

When no interaction occurs (on the side of performer): *Do we hear her, do we ask . . . are we privy [CI,G,4].*

Possessive Pronouns

- (i) 'our' This carries the 'for-us' structure.

A movement from the 'for-itself' to the 'for-us' is made with the utterance 'our'. This is a movement from the particular to the general. The inner is abstracted from an external representation.

Expressing the Inner: *Institute. Always trapped within her own our concern to border "box in" "frame"* [CI,G,6].

Objective pronouns

- (i) 'me' Audience member identifying with performer

Environment: *Find me in the inky black* [PI,G1, 6].

- (ii) 'you' The performer is indicated through direct address by spectator-analyst

Digital Other: *What you make follows you?* [P2,G,1].

Transmorphism: *you are the dull throb of street lamps; you are but more inner than inert; barely have I seen you then you disappear into darkness and light* [P4,G,5].

- (iii) 'it' Performer and/or media indicated as the object of a verb. The hybrid is stripped of gender, even as a composite form: woman and media. Objective pronouns are basic to the hybrids; they are constituted as *it*. These hybrids, however, emote with happiness, anxiety and agitation. They dream, and are troubled by their dreams.

Hybrid: *It moved in time with itself* [P3,G,1]; *This being was a new kind of being, a cyber being. It was a being made of flesh and light. We know it was a being because of its body rhythms* [P3,G1].

- (iv) 'us' Promotes a 'for-us' structure, the ubiquitous first-person plural. 'Us' as audience members co-constituting a shared experience. The triangulation permits an experience 'for-us', rather than an event 'in-itself' or 'for-itself'.

“Us” indicates the demarcated relation between audience members and performer.

Digital Other: *Absorbing her. Resisting, reacting seeing us together* [CI,G,3].

Identification of spectator gathered with other audience members.

Environment: *To react we the horror remind us of a time a place beyond our means* [CI,G,8].

Definite Articles

- (i) ‘the’ Indicates a specific noun or thing (performer and media).

Hybrid: *The shape, the silhouette, boldly traced with a white light. The background now dark. The body unfurls, folds, rolls over, limbs spoking. An emission of light shooting out from the living core – the electric body* [P1,G,1].

The indicates a definitive existence of the thing as unique, but not familiar.¹⁷⁰

The definite article *the* indicates the stability of forms in reception, whereas the use of ‘a’ or ‘an’ indicate a non-specific, non-particular thing. To write ‘an electric body’ or ‘an animal’ would undermine the specificity of a constituted form experienced by the participant.

Demonstrative Pronouns

- (i) ‘this’ Indicates the performer/media/image as an object in the present tense, and is prevalent in instrumental and causal based interactions. Instrumentalism has the relational structure of ‘directed-one sided’.

Digital Other: *Not once was he dancing, this body was a tool* [P4,E,7].

There is a loss of gender and personhood, like in encounters of a hybrid.

¹⁷⁰ The English ‘definite article’ has been classically characterised as ‘familiar’ and/or ‘unique’. An example of when an entity ‘the’ is non-familiar and unique: “If you’re going into the bedroom, would you mind bringing back *The big bag of potato chips that I left on the bed*”; an example of familiarity and non-uniqueness: “[To spouse, in a room with three equally salient windows] *It’s hot in here. Could you please open the window?*” See Birner & Warn (1994, 93-102).

Indefinite Pronouns

- (i) 'one' An abstracted expression of the general, offering a movement from a particular personal pronoun 'she'/'he' (gendered) to an objective pronoun 'you'.

Environment: Laser line hit white effervescent glow when rolling out the measure of one in folds of white, snow dropped depression in snows roll, land [CI,G,1].

Participants' use of the Grammar of Interactions

Distinctive styles are recognised in the participants' use of grammar. There are two conclusions to draw. First, the continual slippage between pronouns may in fact be an issue of method. Second—as a consequence of the first—there is a resulting temporality in grammar use due to practising the method.

- An Issue of Method

The grammar of interactions in participants' written accounts reveal several issues in the application of my phenomenological method. P2 uses the personal pronoun "I" in a significantly different way to P1. How? For P2, it may be the case that he/she is troubled by the paradoxical movement of suspending the 'I' from one's own experience in phenomenological description. Even though the phenomenologist is required to keep out of his or her own way, the 'I' is never dispossessed entirely. In a phenomenology of an emotion, the subjectivity of the self is more pronounced. P2 is very honest about their struggle with the method, evidenced by meta-reflections on the difficulties of describing their every feeling and thought. Tracing the use of 'I' in P2's account indicates an issue with their methodological undertaking. This is unlike P1, who linguistically conflates and identifies with the performer 'I' in receptive empathy. Their use of I is not a reflection, nor expression of constituting their own experience, even though the experiencing never ceases.

Up there—I don't want to go up there. Bad things happen . . . I feel fear, real terror with sound [P1,G,6].

However, P2's non-conflated use of 'I' could be seen as a different expression of receptive empathy at a kinesthetic and emotional level:

I want to do that—I want to be able to do the splits [P2,G,2].

A concentration upon the ‘I’ by participants reveals the sixth encounter ‘expressing the inner’:

Caught in the matrix—do I really know the patterns I create [P2,G,4].

That P2 is unable to escape the veritable force of ‘I’ as an expression of self in their descriptions, the positioning of participants in relation to their kinesthetic and emotional empathy is delineated.

- The Temporality of Grammar Use

The writers’ constant vacillation between personal pronoun use (‘I’, ‘she/he’) and other pronouns and articles (‘it’, ‘theirs’, ‘the’) may be related to a differential in the recollection of the event. When a greater distance opens up between the immediacy of the event as first experienced and subsequent recall in the writing, does the pronoun necessarily become objective? When the memory is veridical are the personal pronouns more readily used? For example, the opening scene may be fresher in re-presentation to the writer, than other moments in the performance. If the recall is dull, vague, or riddled with lacunae fragmenting the unity of the experience, objective pronouns express this distance between now (the writing) and then (the immediate experience). The intimacy of ‘she’, ‘him’, ‘her’ or ‘he’ is lost. In the third workshop (*Transmission Laboratories*), there was little gap between experiencing and writing for the participants. Interestingly, the dancer was referred to by their given name in a number of the descriptions. However, sometimes a slip in reference to “the dancer” was made in the very same paragraph, indicating an objective distance in the loss or vagaries of recall. When memory is insufficient, the image or movement described is associatively and logically completed. For example, if I recall with great clarity and detail the way a performer rises from their chair, but am not able to recall what happens in the seconds following this movement and their presence downstage, I will logically complete the standing person’s movement downstage in order to provide some continuity in the sequence. Imagination too plays its part to fill the micro gaps with sufficient content, gaps that are caused by lapses in memory or distracted attentions during the original impression. A well-recounted story described with unity is often an event that is not recounted with perfect

recall. Where phenomenological description faces the problem of immediacy, the forces of imagination and association are difficult to overcome. Thus, by filling micro-lapses of memory and attention with logical and imaginative content, or utilising objective pronouns in description, we effectively generate mnemonic devices for remembering the unity of experience in the process of descriptive phenomenology.

The projected body is in the same position as when the work started. Lying on his back. The live body is turned away [P4,E,7].

Here we see a vacillation from “the body” to a personal ‘his’, then, a return back to an objective body “the live body”. The participant’s initial recall associatively seeks an earlier memory of a position. The writer retained the opening position in memory. The movement of association in retention begins from the original impression of the performer “lying on his back”. As the performer turns away there is a return to a more vague recollection of the event. The switch between subjective and objective pronouns expresses the snaking in and out of veridical memory and vague recollection of the original impression.

(5b) Negative and Positive Valences

In this context I take valence to mean: “the capacity of something to unite, react, or interact with something else”.¹⁷¹ The following negative and positive valences were identified during analysis and help to deepen my understanding of how interactions between bodies and technologies within receptivity are constituted. A mode of interaction described as having a positive valence is not to be valued or prioritised as a higher union over interactions with a negative valence. The identification of valences in positive or negative terms helps to further articulate structural distinctions within encounters, in particular, the relational structure of action. These distinctions are useful terms of interaction within the overall language of description.

Negative Valence

An interaction described as having a negative valence tends to show a separation, distance or estranged relation between the following: bodies and media (as digital other, environment, etc); parts of the body in relation to its whole; the performer’s self and their body.

(i) Disjunction

The encounter of environment reveals a disjunction between body and media:

They ricocheted wide, then thin and the sound carved through the air on some other frequency. I was thinking of computers and mechanization, and the disjunct between the body and its environment [P4,E,1].

A further disjunction is highlighted by P4.

He moved as if he were not a person, but a body creating some state [P4,E,2].

Only occasionally did I sense a man, cognition, feeling [P4,E,3].

I am suspicious that the writer’s inquiry into the personhood of the performer is an ideological reaction to phenomenological method. The method concentrates on the sense formation of the performer as an object at a transcendental aesthetic level, rather than their

¹⁷¹ (<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Valence>)

psychology. The writer (rightly so) resists reducing the performer to ‘mere’ object phenomena in their quest for the ‘man’. However in this context, the performer is a body constituted aesthetically; it is a phenomenal object external to our perception. In this instance of aesthetic understanding, their personhood is stripped.

Methodologically we bracket personhood to attend to the spatio-temporal structures of the moving, lived body. Alarm bells undoubtedly ring when the dyadic formulation ‘subject-object’ is used in relation to an audience member perceiving and describing a performer. For Husserl, other persons prove problematic. They are not given in the usual way that objects of perception are constituted in objectivity. They are ‘limit phenomena’, being given in the mode of inaccessibility. So if others, other than me, are not objects in the world, how can the performer be acceptingly taken as object?

Taking other persons as limit phenomena affirms the impossibility of having access to or claiming to know another’s mind. However, as a project of phenomenological aesthetics, the performer can be understood as a limit phenomenon while remaining a perceptual object. This dual positioning avoids the problem and charge of objectification that my project may be open to. Taken as a limit phenomenon, I am (as audience) prevented from accessing a performer’s mental states and can give no adequate explanation of how they really are. Recognised as other persons, like me and in relation to me entwined in an intersubjective nexus, I presuppose a co-relative structure of subject-subject. But in their presentifications and representational acts within performance, I have an even more limited access to the performer’s person and identity. These are the accepted limits of a static-genetic method in this context, and the limits and distancing of one’s everyday self from other in performances *per se*. If I want to attempt a phenomenology of their personhood and identity in the fullness of a subject-subject dyad of intersubjectivity, then I need to follow either a phenomenological psychology; a Husserlian generative phenomenology; a Levinasian philosophy; or perhaps a phenomenology of “saturated phenomena”, as undertaken by Jean-Luc Marion.¹⁷² These are all possible directions I do not choose to follow here.

Once entering the realm of performance, the performer is simultaneously other and aesthetic player; their self-identity does not disappear, but in this restriction of access, becomes a more mysterious element within the alchemy of performance. For the purposes of

¹⁷² Saturated phenomena (such as the event, idol, flesh and icon) exceed conceptualisation and our capacity to constitute them. Our intuition of phenomena, always given, is saturated on the one hand by what is visible (seen) and able to be reduced in phenomenality, and that which is invisible or defies decidable reference on the other. See (Marion 2002).

analysis, it is upon the latter that I conduct a phenomenological aesthetics, addressing that which appears—that which is made available. It would be hubris and well outside the capabilities of my current method to suggest I can do both. To restrict analysis to media only would obliterate the interaction between bodies and technologies, and terminate the purpose of the project altogether. The dyad subject-object of a self-other relation is made possible by the presupposed recognition of performer object as always already ‘subject’ in this constitutive-duet that enables interaction.

It is fair to say that in performance the personhood of the performer may be deliberately restricted in their presentation, but this is not the case with all styles. In improvisational and contemporary performance, the ‘me’ of the performer may be presented by direct address to the audience offering no character and no depersonalised physical body. In *Érection* (workshop 2), Pierre Rigal is not interested in presenting ‘Pierre Rigal the person’. We are not invited to know or understand him, only to experience his body interacting with the media. He wants the audience to engage in the perceptual possibilities of their imaginations as intended by the interaction.

(ii) Disconnect

The square marked out some boundary, some defined space in which this was being created. When he jerked, his chest arching up, it was a disconnect from the rest of his body. This separation between the body and the mind was repeated through the work. His head looked up, as if unaware or unable to confront this freakish and unexpected movement [P4,E,1].

The writer suggests a mind-body dualism. The performer’s body involuntarily moves disconnected from the performer’s intention. Interestingly, in the writer’s quest to find the man of “cognition” and “feeling”, and to restore him to a holistic ideal of embodiment—I am self aware, I am in control of my movements—they manage to emphasise the performer as a limit phenomenon in the classical sense of the problem, an aporia that persists unabated in contemporary philosophy of mind, phenomenology and cognitive science (Gallagher and Zahavi 2009).

(iii) Interference

A small blip on the grid is moving about, then another blip. These blips are where the thin neon line gets fatter and fuzzier. Only after a few seconds do I realise his body is the interference [P4,E,4].

A rhythm of pulsating “blips” is produced. The media appears to be performing alone. The performer’s body is not visible for sometime; once the lines are seen to touch the body, the interaction is described as interference. It appears to be a case of ‘one-sided directed’ action: performer acting upon media.

Positive Valence

(i) Harmony

Unquestioning affinity with surrounds [P2,G,8].

Where interactions between all elements are harmonious, there is no disconnect, interference or disjunction. There is no separation or estrangement, only coherence and unity—all elements working together.

(ii) Intersection

The following excerpt is from P4’s Task B:

This body is still there, now intersecting more fully with the grid and his presence becoming more obvious [P4,E,5].

Here, they have rewritten the opening ‘interference’ scene described in Task A (excerpt in (iii) above). This encounter of digital touch between body and media is no longer described as “interference”, it is described in more positive terms as “intersecting”. An embodied presence is restored to the performer, highlighting a union with the grid lines. The media plays a more significant role in this second account. Presence is too restored in the interaction of interference (digital touch) in the transition to an intersecting encounter of digital other. This is a reciprocal relational structure of action.

(6) **Orientation: Embodiment in Receptivity**

In the first place let us note that orientation is a constitutive structure of the thing.
Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 1972 (316)

My analysis of written accounts has foregrounded the role of orientation in understanding embodiment in both the spectator and performer within receptivity. P4's televisual experience of *GLOW* is a meditation on their visual embodiment, and is captured in the following text:

Eyes lens aim by frame [P4,G,1].

Life good if eyes read by decay of lit icons [P4,G,2].

Eye cadence spiroglyphs absorbing body's and pixel pixies [P4,G,3].

Square made trapezoidal by way of framed eye minds. I mind caress blots of rawshash [sic] tests but spilled with extra in and strewn wet evaporating before minds ey(I)e blinks [P4,G,4].

Mine eyes of their viscous covering [P4,G,5].

The drawn eye—beating of . . . lashes against shadows, the sensors beating lids of circadian rhythms [P4,G,6].

I am half aware of your veil covering the eye in which you could be a sensor of me [P4,G,9].

P4 engages in a rolling poetics about framing (floor, wall, camera lens, and television), their eyes become a prominent framing phenomenon to pay attention to in the overall experience. When the eyes transcend as a framing device (Sartre 1972), the phenomenological claim that the body is a complete *zero point of orientation* is challenged. To recapitulate this earlier discussion, we can see that from this latter perspective that all objects in the world are always relative to our body as being left or right, near or far, beside, beneath, or above. We cannot perceive our own bodies in the same relative relations of orientation as we can with other objects in the world: the table is before me; the moon is above me. The body is absolute presence. P4's experience demonstrates that the eyes are no longer a mere zero point of orientation. Their televisual experience brings the eyes (not their vision) into focus as a framing device to further mediate their overall reception. This raises the question of how we experience our eyes in interactions where there is no televisual framing: do they continue

to be objectively experienced as transcendent lenses or framing devices? Or are they engaged in another way? Does the eye remain a zero point of orientation in the reception of live, mediated performance? How does the reception of mediated performance reconstitute the rest of our body in relation to structural questions of orientation?

A different participant describes their visual embodiment in the performance *Érection*:

The bars of light created a designed state—the contrast between black and white so stark, as if I was looking at lines in a painting. So black my eyes strained. So white, I had to squint [P4,E,1].

They are well aware of their embodiment while watching, and describe their visual reaction to the givenness of lighting that creates a stark contrast. The description indicates a *style of orientation*: their eyes becoming filters, lenses ‘strained and squinting’ in relationship to what they see. Even though the colour causes the straining and squinting of their eyes, I am interested in how this experience orients the perceiver in relation to their eyes in the continued perception of external objects in audience reception.

From these examples, I wonder whether a more concentrated meditation on the visual embodiment of the spectator—where their eyes are taken as transcendent objects—might reveal important information about interactions for dramaturgical purposes. Squinting, blinking, blindedness, or even staring may be framing devices of the eye to be productively elicited by particular performance conditions, and/or avoided if vision is not to be obstructed by the eyes reaction to certain lighting states, or problematic distances.

In the performance installation of the third workshop the audience roams—an awareness of their eyes is often foregrounded:

Other sources of light in the room fade up slowly dragging my lazy eyes away . . . slide back into the gazing. My eyes are dragged to and fro . . . I don’t want to look away [P5,TL,1,2].

Participants acutely describe the movement of their eyes in the struggles with attention; their attention is visually drawn, the eyes described as transcendent objects “dragging”, “snapping” and “criss-crossing” their attentions between rivaling phenomena.

For a moment my eyes snap to the floor [P5,TL,3].

Trapping me to keep absorbing too much of one thing—too much because my eyes are criss-crossing in diagonal blown-out highlights [P7,TL,3].

Orientation: digital double as screen presence and spatio-temporal distortions

On the screen she has no knees, a body, yes. Calves, yes. But a strip is missing. She folds, drops to her haunches. Now the strip is missing from her torso. Maybe she fell between the cracks? [P5,TL,3-4]

Here P5 experiences a corporeal body captured as an image and projected onto a surface in strips; the dancer is dismembered and reconstituted as a moving collage. The dancer is now in sections with body parts missing. The writer constitutes a geometrically distorted spatial world for the dancer to negotiate: she falls between the cracks of her missing body parts.

Later, she flits into the screen. Now its like she has flung herself out from between the cracks. From between those two planes [P5,TL,4].

In the following instance of spatial distortion the media acts-upon the dancer's screen double, smashing her image violently:

Now screen. I can really look at get up close, see its pores, its skin. It lets me in, the screen smashed the dancer, obliterates, violence, disappearance. Splitness. Cotton, a black hole, blue vortex I could fall into, strangely inviting [P6,TL,2].

There is attraction over repulsion in the structural force of this spectator's attention. They move close and kinesthetically lose their balance in this orientation, the image on screen creates a vortex, inviting the spectator into a black hole of wonder. She becomes a giant:

Looking up at a giant, her feet large, shadows deepen the dimension of her base, the top disconnected. She moves with the room, spins above a spectator in the shadows [P3,TL,3].

Scalar differentials between the image on screen and dancing feet on the floor promote very different experiences for the spectator. In some instances, the large-scale feet are found to be discomforting and/or suspicious to the spectator, an image forced upon them by surveillance technologies. A style of image capture and manipulation that distorts the corporeal body with whom they stand next to, breathing alongside at a one-to-one scale, sharing in a continuous space.

Miniature. I felt Tall. Scales starting to feel confusing. Looking around. Large Screen. Large dancer's feet. Momentum starting to confuse. Checking back looking for the source. Surveillancing—its got to be here . . . where is it? [P7,TL,1]

In one account, the participant retreats from the image and hatches a “plan” with different “strategies” to improve their spatial relations with the dancer. They desire to be closer to the warm body; they are repulsed by the cold and distant image that distorts their experience:

I lie down and feel the intimacy inherent in that act. I prostrate myself before the dancer without submission. See more detail on her feet. Enjoy . . . enjoy . . . the light I look up to distorts the edges, her edges. I have become a camera now, but I feel like a dance partner now I'm on the floor [P8,TL,3].

They focus like a camera, adjusting to the proximities rather than their “social understanding of theatrical distance” [P8,TL,1]. The overall immersion of the spectator within the installation reveals an embodied play or traversing of proximities: the spectator has the opportunity to move closer to feel the warmth, and see the detail; or to move further away and take in all the elements and take a perspective that is “more big scale receptive”; an experience described as “[d]istant. Colder”, but nonetheless desired [P7,TL,2]. The audience’s freedom to move within the space so close to the dancer and the media—also becoming part of the performance at times—challenges values of performance proximities: how close can we get? Can we, should we touch? These questions extend to the mediatised image: does it see or feel me? Can it touch back?

We all keep our polite distance. Could I poke Miranda? Stick my face in hers? Can't even put my boot on her image when I want to. So obedient [P6,TL,2].

Before she left I sat with her feet—that's not rude—looking at someone's feet. I look up at her legs, it feels intimate, too intimate this travelling gaze [P6,TL,4].

In a moment of touch between the dancer’s digital double and spectator, the urge to touch back becomes overwhelming for the spectator.

She leaves [corporeal Miranda] and I am reacquainted with mediatised Miranda. I like her and we do a duet where she dives over my legs and then under my seated body into disappearance. She comes back quickly, a tiny shock. I want to pat her head. I tentatively and quickly do it. Transgression [P6,TL,4].

In both these examples, the value of considerate, consensually determined distance between the performer and spectator continues to be recognised. P6 returns the touch with intent only once they are climbed on by the dancer's digital double. They first experience a temptation to poke, pat, interfere or disrupt the distance. The temptation (as desire) to touch presupposes a responsibility of ethical response to the other presented as digital double. They are faced with the alterity of the performer; to touch their live streamed image is a reaction and interaction understood as bearing consequences. For the spectator, they recognise that the image double is connected intimately to the dancer's physical being. To touch back involves a meaningful negotiation, rather than an unchecked presumption that there is no connectivity between the performer and their digital double. During Susan Kozel's performance of Paul Sermon's *Telematic Dreaming*, a male visitor to the installation uses a knife to slash her projected digital double, managing of course only to physically destroy the duvet.¹⁷³ That the spectator violates an ethics of responsibility in this performance context without dramatic recourse does not entail that this unspoken ethics of responsibility does not exist. The image permits a transgression of touch, but this raises the question of what injury, violence, stimulation or arousal can touching effect in the performer observing such an interaction with their image? It seems in most cases (perhaps Kozel's examples of violence aside—where the spectator does not treat the image as real, or connected to the corporeal performer in any significant way) that an encounter with digital other as digital double carries the same level of responsibility to not interrupt, interfere with, touch, titillate, or perpetrate violence towards a corporeal performer—even if pushing someone off the stage has at some point crossed our minds.

The spectator's experience of time is also distorted by the manipulation of spatial image.

Tony. This is not the room I'm in that I see up there. The room I'm in is dark and square and straight. The room I see on the screen is high and sloped and towering and is all ceiling. Tony [P4,TL,3].

Footage recorded in the first presentation is rendered in play-back in the second. Use of previous footage captures a participant (Tony) and a section of the room from a momentary camera perspective and then replayed. The switch between live streaming and play-back

¹⁷³ Kozel is adamant that she felt "uncomfortable" and assaulted during these violent attacks upon her image, doubling over when another visitor elbowed her hard in the stomach. For her, the body corporeal is not "obsolete" in virtual technology events; "violence enacted" by a spectator upon Kozel's image reportedly "hurt" (Kozel 2007, 96-97).

distorts the spatial construction of the room. The lingering orientation of spatial objects to the spectator is distorted by its past; the impression given is of two different rooms. Temporal distortion through the spatial manipulation of images provokes an unusual spatio-temporal experience for the spectator: they become dislocated; their once familiar orientation becomes unfamiliar.

Orientation: other worlds and environment. Constituting the miniature in kinesthesia and imagination

- *Finding a way, finding a passage through the shifting shards of worlds [P1, G5].*

Movements of a new bodily logic in imagined worlds are created by interactions of environment.

Coming into being, wrapped, bounded, permeable membranes, explosive potentials, retreating, retracting, reducing to a planar geometry [P1, G5].

The body does not directly mimic, but emulates the logic of the movement within these worlds of moving lines and perspectives. The human body cannot ‘be’ that thing; it is ontologically impossible. The body will take on the logic of the movement, like the robotic street dancer who does not try to *be* a robot, but attempts to move like one.

It’s a great labyrinth. Fuck it’s beautiful [P2,G,5].

The interactive space takes on complex, architectural dimensions; it is a rhythmically rich imagined place.

- *Wash upon the pixel shores the coral critters, jitters—fluid baubles cascade sideways. Flat ocean beyond flat, swelling screens, the reaction of opposites of tone and glare [P4,G,6].*

In P4’s forming of a marine environment in *GLOW*: ocean, fish, coral, tides, shores, nets and ocean swells, the interactive encounter eradicates the transcendent distancing of televisual screen that once dominated the writer’s descriptions; the screen now ‘swells the flat

ocean behind'. Once discombobulated by their viewing, a 'coherency of presence' exists for the writer now.

- *A grainy circle at my feet—vertigo. I sway backwards and forwards balancing at the edge of an unstable floor, flickering, moving, gravity suspended [P2,TL_P,1].*

Distracted by down projection. Attracted by shifting sensation. I am huge again. I imagine my time in Japan at the pool of water with the crow. Be careful now—I could spend the entire time looking at this in wonder and enjoyment [P7,TL,1].

A simple light casting a circle onto the floor, sometimes filled with the projected moving dancer filmed overhead at another location in the performance space, transforms the relationship between a different spectator and their embodied orientation to the floor surface. The circle of light triggered a strong place-based memory of staring into a pool of water. The circle is not perceived analogically or mimetically as a pool of water. The joyful experience of standing at its projected edges drags forth a sensibly felt embodied memory to this participant's present impression. This memory appears to be imaginatively projected, transmorphing the circle of light into a pool of water beside the crow of a former experience. It is more than a mere mental representation; they sway in their reverie.

- *Train goes backwards and forwards like dreams of mini world, attack of the 50ft woman . . . Wouldn't mind running in time to train or riding inside it inspecting big body so close its got a sunshine feel to it. Yes, like being in a field [P1,TL_P,1,2].*

Here, the encounter of environment triangulates performer, train and spectator through a differential in scale (tiny and giant), sound, tempo and nostalgia. The writer desires to shrink in imagination and to run alongside the train, warmed by the sun in an open field. They sit on the train, looking out at the 50-foot woman dancing inside the tracks. By shrinking ones body and constituting the scene from an imagined perspective (shrunken and inside the train) is a transporting and transformational experience at a kinesthetic and spatial level.

The performance installation provided experiences of spatial and scalar transformations of internal proportions: a shrunken embodiment in relation to the given dimensions of an environing space—a little like Alice's "DRINK ME" experience down the rabbit hole:

‘[w]hat a curious feeling!’ said Alice; ‘I must be shutting up like a telescope.’ And so it was indeed: she was now only ten inches high, and her face brightened up at the thought that she was now the right size for going through the little door into that lovely garden. First, however, she waited for a few minutes to see if she was going to shrink any further: she felt a little nervous about this; ‘for it might end, you know,’ said Alice to herself, ‘in my going out altogether, like a candle. I wonder what I should be like then?’ (Carroll 1962, 30)

In experiencing the model train, a nostalgic reflection upon childhood shrinks the participant’s embodiment taking on a miniaturised perspective, reversing the original givenness of their orientation. They are now inside the train.

Ten minutes to reflect on a childhood fetish, forgotten. The model railway, streams of returning memory of tunnel obsessions and tunnel building. Insisting on taking my head out of the carriage to observe the airy impact of speeding train on cavernous dark [P8,TL,1].

The perceptual impression of the mini train does more than provoke a specific retention as an act of remembering, such as playing with a train-set. The perceiving body in impressional perception undergoes a radical transformation in embodied imagining onboard the tiny choo-choo train. This raises the following questions: how do we encounter the “tiny” or “miniature”? What are the structures of embodied imagining in experiences of the miniature? How is meaning constituted at the level of kinesthesia?¹⁷⁴ The body is involved in a movement of scale as it shrinks to immerse in an imaginatively simulated replica of our everyday proportionate reality, now, a world of giants.

As a child I made sand castles at the beach, big in scale, palatial in design. Entering the castle relative to my shrunken embodied self, I would move about rooms rendered in opulent detail, experienced visually and sensibly by association. I always dug a deep moat to stop an imagined enemy; the rising tide licking at my toes, ready to wash this construction away. Its architectural interior was constructed to resemble past, primary impressions of castles and palaces encountered in photos, footage and illustrations, the act of imagination dragging images from the past into the present, and radically disengaging the body from its usual embodiment.

¹⁷⁴ I will not take up these specific questions or further these insights here. I hope to pursue the *Tiny Worlds Project* as postdoctoral research.

It is interesting how the model train becomes a collective motif of childhood experiences in this performance, even when a participant has never had the experience of playing with a train.

Suddenly I'm in childhood, caused by train [P7,TL,3].

Arguably this could have something to do with constituting meaningful structures in childhood experiences of the miniature—whether train, sand castle, doll house or genie bottle. On this account, these inaugurating, transformative moments at a kinesthetic level continue to inform our encounters with the miniature. As children we shrink and are immersed in these tiny worlds. As adults we retro-actively constitute like experiences during aesthetic encounters of the miniature, imaginatively feeling our tiny embodiment. My untested thesis here is that imagined scalar movements of our entire bodily sensorium are somehow structurally retended from childhood, informing our future aesthetic experiences of the miniature. A further interesting question relates to how this impacts upon our everyday spatio-temporal selves in relation to other objects in the world. Do we inhabit space differently? What are the transformative kinesthetic dimensions of encountering the miniature?

Being on board the train and poking one's head outside the carriage to look at the 50-foot woman is immediately recognised as a retentional structure carried forth and recollected in an embodied way. My point and motivation for a deeper inquiry (not to be undertaken here) is that all experiences of 'the miniature' share unique and overlapping structures within embodied imagination, and are—most likely—originally constituted in childhood.

(7) **Transcendent Movement: Perceptual Possibilities**

I account here for a transcendent movement of the imaginary, not absolute transcendence—divine or otherwise. Each interaction typified as encounter is a movement of transcendence. For example, the hybrid transcends the human form to offer us possible alternative forms. The imaginary loosens and pushes the limits of identity beyond the human.

So much living potential, the electric potential of these organisms of which humans are only one form
[P1,G,2].

A transcendent movement involves dimensional conversions of both a temporal and spatial order. Lyotard's *figural* creates elusive and evocative phenomena, suggesting something similar. But what do I mean by transcendence in this context? In receptivity, there is transcendence through the imaginary. We go beyond body, light, and stage environment, momentarily escaping these immanent confines. There is a co-directional vacillation between immanent body and transcendent imaginings: a movement back and forth igniting small spacings. In the 'thereness' of the performer's body, we hear them breathe and gasp. Auditory receptivity constitutes the corporeal with a fleshly sense. We wait on the edge of the white mat with the performer in their preparedness to interact with the media. We experience a movement from the perception of corporeal body toward the imaginary, a movement that releases us into an *irreal* realm, a place that is "everywhere and nowhere" (Husserl 1973, 259). Within this context, the hinge between immanence and transcendence is often digital other. Digital other is a separating force that establishes body and media as independent entities, but is also an encounter where transcendence swells the imaginary, such as the amorphic, predatory ink blob described in participants' accounts of *GLOW*.

Reversal of Transcendent movements: transcending the hybrid body with voice

It was a weightless/gutless being that uttered sounds when agitated [P3,G,1].

A being devoid of bodily substance, or weight bearing materiality to ground it, still utters sounds signaling a return to corporeality—understood here in relative terms to transcendence as an immanent body. Voice reasserts the body as substance. As substance, the body always has the structure of becoming transcendent within reception.

A breathy sound tears from her throat [P1,G,4].

Perhaps it was trapped in itself [P3,G,2].

The performer is vocally heard for the first time; it is a striking moment described by four of the participants. Before the scream the theatre was audibly saturated by electronic sound. The scream appears to reverse the movement of transcendence: a flight from this being of flesh and light ('cyber being'/'electric body') back to the immanent flesh of the performer. The voice becomes the transcendent moment of return back to the performer. This is the moment when the performer emerges from the floor, escaping the "cradle", or "crucible" of gridlines. The scream, an audible, non-mediatised sound, is a transcendent movement away from the interaction of digital othering and transmorphing that takes place on the stage's surface. Voice tears her from the tessellations of body entwined with light. She is stilled momentarily, freed from this interaction. Later she is possessed.

Muffled solidity/you singular bird cry. The fish untangles the net of her captor's flirtation. [P4,G,8].

The voice as a reverse transcendent power releases the performer from the mediatic net that restrains her as a fish in a transmorphic environment. The performer awakens us through sonorous cries; the performer is equally awakened in a return to self.

Exhausting screech. She yelps with quavering voice downward and upward—off the floor from beneath the lines masking, face masks [CI,G,1].

More often than not, the transmorphing of performer into animal, insect or inanimate thing presents a doubling of encounters and so a double movement of transcendence in the

interactions between performer and media. Take for example transmorphing with environment:

A bug caught in the death lights of an insect zapper [P1,G,1].

The fish untangles in the net of her captors flirtation, - entranced in the rhythm as neons follow one's every movement [P4,G,7].

You are the dull throb of street lamps. Your pattern making is a suburb of your strange glow [P4,G,5].

Onstage, Offstage

The unique quality of media is that it never enters from off stage; it appears then disappears onstage. The sense formation of media does not occur within the threshold between offstage and onstage. As Gieseckam (2007) states:

The treatment of space, time and action often differs radically from dominant forms of theatre, as the camera may introduce action from elsewhere and other times, past, present, and future, or even places and action dreamt of or fantasised. Traditional boundaries between offstage and onstage become blurred, as the stage becomes the meeting-point of many locations, real and fictional, and of fictional characters with filmed real-world figures (10).

There is certainly on or off, but no sense of a world beyond the stage. No sedimentation.

Fade to black pin inky spot shallow fold [CI,G,9].

The explosion—and yes the ‘micro dot’ ending leaves me in no doubt I know the plan [P2,G,6].

The performer often stands at the edge of the playspace waiting for the media to appear, to emerge on the edge, come into being, then disappear.

Emptiness—fluorescence tunes of light criss-crossing the delineated space, a body emerges on the edge of the space [P1,G,1].

The last image—the dancer on the edge of the white rectangle, a final glimmer [P1,G,5].

Space, objective time, and action are contained within the edges of the visible stage space. There is no off stage place of representation, no ‘there’ or ‘then’ indications of another room, a place of past or future, near or distance, where a spatio-temporal somewhere else melds the on and off stage worlds together.¹⁷⁵ Time is both continuous (in the sense that it has a beginning, middle and end) and discontinuous. Small vignettes in time transcend time, space and place. A transition of encounters—say digital touch to digital other—becomes a small twist in time.

An amoebic form morphing off to the outer edge

¹⁷⁵ See (Filmer 2006) and (McAuley 1999).

In *GLOW*, there is a moment where digital other begins to form as an amorphous cloud behind the performer. These formations occur on the edge—an aspect of technological transparency, highlighting the limits of where interactions can occur. Most digital forms visually experienced within audience are constrained by a stage frame.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁶ Stage constraints on the visual do not extend to sound. I am reminded of the deliberate offstage use of sound in Australian director Barry Kosky's *Women of Troy* (2008). During the production a phone rang multiple times and was left unanswered. We were given the impression that there was a room just beyond the onstage/offstage border. The sound not only represented another place, but also indicated a caller on the other end located somewhere even more remote from the stage. The onstage players were drawn to this place. Our sense of stage place bled into the immediate offstage (and beyond) by this nauseatingly persistent offstage sound: who will answer the phone? Who is calling? We were required to imagine this place in receptivity without a perceivable visual impression.

**(8) Receptive Empathy: (a) the Role of Audience (b) The *For-Us*
Structure of Audience**

Receptive empathy has emerged as a constitutive structure of interaction within my analysis. Receptive empathy (or more precisely ‘empathy in reception’) was the term that came to mind when I first assessed the experiences of participants *feeling or desiring to feel the movement of others*.¹⁷⁷ I never took empathy as a prerequisite phenomenon to be investigated; instances were disclosed during my analysis of the participants’ experiences. As a result, I do not draw directly on the literature synthesised in Foster’s genealogy of choreography, kinesthesia and empathy, or the work of other projects, which take the discovery of kinesthetic empathy seriously, as I outlined in Chapter 4, but I certainly acknowledge their importance. My approach to analysis is strictly guided by eidetic and hermeneutic disclosure. Receptive empathy is understood as an inter-relational process of recognition in the spectator, feeling the moving performer and media. The following pages discuss the structural modes of receptive empathy from an experiential basis. Put simply from the spectator’s perspective:

- (i) audience desires to transcend their normal mode of embodiment.
- (ii) receptive empathy allows the audience member to transcend (i), thus
- (ii) receptive empathy is an imperative for audience to satisfy this desire

As this formulation suggests, receptive empathy facilitates the desire for audience members to go beyond their normal mode of embodiment. The desire is at once some measure of satisfaction in a performative and fictionally formed context. The degree of satisfaction is founded in the language of participants. To begin discussion, I draw upon specific statements that relate directly to their embodiment, kinesthesia and imagination during encounters with the various interactions.

¹⁷⁷ Despite the fact that I speak about similar types of experiences, I will continue to use the term receptive, rather than kinesthetic in order to keep my analysis distinct from contemporary studies discussed in Chapter 4. The use of receptive is apposite to my emphasis on reception inspired by a Gadamerian aesthetic theory that undergirds my phenomenological method. It also allows me to make a distinction between kinesthetic and emotional types of empathy, even though the former is not divorced from the latter.

(8a)

The Role of Audience

- I want to do what they are doing

There is a strong desire from the spectator to do what the performer is doing, and to ‘feel’ exactly what they are feeling. There is an awakening of kinesthetic sense in the writer by the performer other; the writer identifies a feeling and/or sensation within themselves.

I want to do that—I want to be able to do the splits [P2,G,2].

The writer views the performer’s physicality and actions as an optimal mode of embodiment; they address their own bodily capacity, desiring to ‘do’ like them. Spectator envy is an aspect of receptive empathy. The spectator desires the movement possibilities of another. They are kinesthetically motivated second-hand. What do I mean by this? The ‘I can’ of kinesthetic motivation originates in the performer. The ‘I can’ is not something we cognitively deliberate about while performing actions, it is a motivation at the level of the kinesthetic: I can climb the very next stair in the enduring action of climbing a staircase, but I do not cognitively process an ‘I can’ for each stair. In kinesthetic empathy there is a doubling or supervening of kinesthetic motivation upon the performer’s ‘I can’ by the spectator. Motivation in the spectator originates in the performer.

The ‘I’ in this example undermines the for-us structure of triangulation between all players. There is a separation of the participant from other audience members in their recognition and identification with the performer. However, this ‘I’ is non-conflated in identification, such that the participant is distinct from the performer. A desire for receptive empathy is proclaimed:

Longing to watch and feel and do and feel along with him [P2,E,1].

He rolls—and balances. Rolls and balances. And—splat I want to do that! [P1,E,1]

She swoops round sort of doubling body up inside circle want to do that too feel what it may feel like [P1,TL_P,1].

Interestingly, in the roving performance of *Transmission Laboratories*, immersed participants wrote descriptions revealing less receptive empathy than performances viewed at a distance. Descriptions of their embodiment while watching were more prevalent:

I stand nailed to the ground like my legs are two drills whose weight plummets into the earth. I consider moving. Slide back into the gazing [P5,TL,2].

Enjoy . . . enjoy . . . the light I look up to distorts the edges, her edges. I have become a camera now, but I feel more like a dance partner now I am on the floor. Feel less dominant demanding perhaps my image now belongs to her more than the other way round which I felt before [P8,TL,3].

- Feeling satisfaction

Toes stretch satisfaction breathe burrowing this is good [P2,G,1].

Comfort of watching one person exercise it out on behalf of us all [P2,G,4].

The spectator feels the movement of the performer stretching their toes. In this instance, the imperative for receptive empathy is fulfilled. They have transcended their embodiment through the movement of another. The stretching of toes, which are not their own, is evaluated positively. The movement of transcendence is not a great imaginative leap from their normal embodiment. The action of stretching toes is well within the realms of possibility. Consequently, a spectrum between the opposing poles ‘close’ and ‘far’ may be considered. During experiences of receptive empathy this spectrum represents varying degrees of transcendence from normal embodiment. Feeling the stretch of toes while watching a performer stretch their toes is something that we have done or could do (close); while doing the splits is not necessarily something we have done or could do (far), but could imagine in the immanent-transcendence of our embodiment. And yet, doing the splits is not as far as the embodied imagining of flying like an angel, or shrinking to be a tiny person onboard a model train. All experiences are relative to each other in their identification as being close or far.

- I feel their fear

Up there—I don’t want to go up there. Bad things happen [P1,G,6].

I feel fear, real terror with sound [CI,G,2].

Start again—clean state a psychological terror always with her [CI,G,6].

The sense of fear is very real for both writers in this instance of ‘digital violence’. This fear is expressed through an ‘I-conflation’ between writer and performer, not a second-person, or third-person observation. The ‘I-conflation’ offers an interesting perspective on second-person issues that question how it is possible to have access, or to know another person’s mind. In the *Poetics of Reception* accounts, expressions of the ‘I-conflation’ were revealed in terms of their structure, narrowing the gap between self and other in the understanding of the other’s experience. This is where performative-based bodily gestures representing feelings and/emotions can offer insight into the epistemological gap of knowing others minds. In this performative moment, access to the other in receptive empathy is no less truthful than in non-performative circumstances. The suspension of disbelief is a belief in the truth of the performance. Reality is the performative pretence co-constituted in the triangulation between performer, media and audience member. Performer and audience member live the truth of that representation. By and large, representations can provide leading clues to understanding others’ minds.¹⁷⁸

Receptive Empathy: proximal and futural

I remember being overcome with fear when the inky black cloud (amoebic form) expanded in size and filled the space behind the performer, giving the impression that it was about to devour her.

Tremble she will shiver. Nordic goddess of the right haunted by black globules. I feel fear, real terror with sound [CI,G,2].

¹⁷⁸ Dance, along with other aesthetic-based representational forms such as acting, has provided excellent examples to researchers working within neuro-phenomenology and cognitive science. Cognitionists following the unobservability principle (UP) claim that it is impossible to see the mental states of other people, while others claim direct perceptual access (DP): a belief that some parts of mental processes can be seen in action. On this account, bodily actions and gestures express and constitute some mental phenomena. Dancers and actors present to the researcher of cognition more possibilities for assessing a range of bodily and facial gestures within group interactions than everyday simulations (see David Kirsch’s research on distributed cognition with Wayne McGregor’s company Random Dance at The University of California, San Diego, http://www.randomdance.org/r_research). For the researcher of cognition, the representational or artificial nature of expression or action does not invalidate outcomes informing our understanding of human interaction. As with most behavioural research, the conditions in social interaction and cognition experiments are contrived or manipulated. The true emotion from the stimulant (versus the respondent) may be artificial, rather than a true expression of their emotion or thought. Take for example Dr Edward Tronik’s famous “Still Face Experiment” (1975) where a mother quickly changes her facial expression from happy, engaged and playful with their baby to one that is blank and non-responsive. Over two-minutes the mother remains expressionless while the baby uses all its known interactive strategies to get the mother to cooperate and respond in kind (pointing, smiling, making happy noises, screaming, moving their entire body to seek attention). When the mother does not respond, the baby rapidly transitions from happiness to tears. See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=apzXGEbZht0>.

In ghostly apparitions following she knows they are there, she feels back body perpendicular to the white [CI,G,5].

I did not want to look. Chills rippled along my spine, as though this large mass was about to engulf me. I felt a contradictory panic: wanting her to turn around and see this pending danger and make her escape; and to not turn around, waylaying the moment of shock, pain, or possible death. These proximal and futural modes of receptive empathy, on the side of the spectator, are what make horror films so successful. For the most part, such experiences are associated with the late-'70s/early '80s *slasher* genre of horror film, where a killer lurks in dark places unbeknown to the victim, or in the American horror film, where a demon or supernatural force possesses or haunts, having material effects on its victims. Spectators co-constitute the horror both proximally and futurally. The spectator feels overwhelming fear for the performer who isn't aware that Norman Bates (to use a well-known and much earlier example of suspenseful horror) dressed as his mother and brandishing a large carving knife in a ridiculous wig, hovers on the other side of the shower curtain in the Alfred Hitchcock film *Psycho* (1960). At this moment, the horror is all on the side of the spectator, singularly felt and heightened by an imagined outcome. The horror is temporally bound in a futural expectation—the 'what-is-about-to-happen'—and is felt proximally, as the fear heightens to a peak and the gap closes between the two bodies culminating in (what I will term) the *horror terminus*. Once the performer/victim sees the knife in Norman's hand, or is engulfed by the black inky cloud in *GLOW*, the receptive empathy of horror ends. Its terminus found in the performer's recognition of the predatory other, whether a knife-wielding corporeal figure or a spectral entity. The horror terminus may then transform receptive empathy from an experience of the futural and proximal to an embodiment of viscerally felt pain: the plunging of a knife into flesh, etc.

- Feeling joy

Joy in the relentless choreography . . . Look closer does she bite her nails—joy and deep satisfaction [P2,G,8].

How to describe this part—the joyful, ecstatic, spirit, free, leaping. To end here [P1,G,2].

Across most of the accounts there are experiences identified as joyful. Where the spectator is confined to a chair in traditional auditorium seating, the joy is described from (1) the perspective of the writer: they feel joy to watch another move, or (2): they describe the performer as experiencing joy. In (1), joy is felt as a sense of elation, a freedom and unbounded pleasure in their embodiment. The ‘I can’ of kinesthetic motivation is again supervening in the feeling of this joy. Kinetically they transcend their seated embodiment. In (2), the structure of receptive empathy is different. The joy identified within the spectator first prompted by the movement of the performer is then projected back onto the performer; the performer is described to be moving with joy. In this zig-zagging transference of joy between performer and audience member that originates in the performer, does the joy lose its intensity?

In the *Transmission Laboratory* performances, the audience moved throughout the installation, never bound to the confines of an auditorium chair. The identification of joy in most of these descriptions correlates with (1) above. The joy felt by the spectator-analyst is described more intensely, often repeated throughout the account, and is related to an embodied imagining that takes place in the spectator. In the former examples of watching the dancer from the auditorium seat, there is a joy of transcending their bounded embodiment through a kinesthetic imagining: feeling the jump, the splits. As roving audience members, the constitutions of encounters that would usually be made from a distance become more complex for the spectator-analyst at an embodied imagining level. By closing the gap between themselves and stage phenomena of interactions, their overall receptivity—from the lowest to the highest; from the most passive to the most active—deepens as a constituted and constituting part of that world. The experience is transforming and transporting.

Joyous feeling fantasy world she swoops round sort of doubling body up inside circle [P1,TL_P,1].

The movements really concentrating on fingers my fingers move too, transported, train? Transported elsewhere, child like joy, in tummy and arms and mouth and all around as if this is all for me [P1,TL_P,1-2].

Where joy is experienced in receptive empathy, the constitution of the miniature in kinesthesia is deepened:

Excitement and raised sound when door opens. I am a child with the choo choo train then the images screens floor protected encircled feeling of joy, smiles [P1,TL_P,1].

- I want to be

I want to talk about and be animal/creative/cyborgs—and have unquestioning affinity with surrounds [P2,G,8].

Such existential expressions further the desire of the spectator-analyst who not only wants to ‘do’ like the performer but also wants to ‘be’ that which they constitute in receptivity. This is a complex form of receptive empathy to satisfy, a complete transformation into the very interaction they constitute. Most of the descriptions indicate receptive empathy in expressions of “I want to do” like the performer, rather than “I want to be” the interaction I constitute. The latter desire is less readily articulated.

- Feeling the thud of other

I don’t want to look away. Until the sensible (in my feet) audible and breakable thud of bones landing on the ground puts its arms around my attention [P5,TL,2].

Here we have a case of auditory-based receptive empathy. The dancer lands on the ground; their landing is heard and simultaneously felt in the feet of the participant whose visual attention is immediately drawn away from the screen. For the most part, visual attention dominates experiences of seated performances, especially when there is a distance between performer and audience member. Auditory sense is not completely absent in such instances, however while immersed within an installation the other senses such as hearing, touch and the olfactory senses can be equally heightened. Our entire sensorium can be receptively opened and awakened. A spectator can feel the “sensible” in their feet through a performer’s thudding land; two bodies are connected through the flesh of the event.

- Like tasting numbers: synaesthesia

Synaesthesia is a confusion between the senses in abnormal associations.

This is what I see—the map of thoughts—like tasting numbers/seeing sounds/textural emotions. Black imprints—the beautiful disassociation [P2,G,3].

This writer sees thoughts, sounds, and emotions in the graphic and describes their experience as a “beautiful disassociation”—synaesthesia: sensory confusion between the five senses. Just as one is able to taste numbers, one is able to ‘see sound’ and ‘feel texture in the emotions’. The writer sees the mediatic representations and abstracts initially about the performer’s (singular), and then (more generally), humankind’s psychological and existential condition.

The externally imposed lines. Lines she created for herself [P2,G,6].

Why does she need to mutter? Trapped in boxes of our own making [P3,G,2].

The interactive encounter ‘expressing the inner’ is understood through a style of synaesthesia and is a feature of receptive empathy between the spectator-analyst and media. The media expresses and/or externalises the spectator’s (and/or performer’s) inner world, and is seen by the spectator as a map of thoughts. Vision and thoughts become confused. We no longer think thoughts we see them. Visual reception becomes a form of synaesthesia.

(8b)

The *For-Us* Structure of Audience

As previously argued, the role of audience in their receptivity of interactions is of primary significance in this work of phenomenological aesthetics. The “we”, “us”, or “our” identification of being-with other audience by an individual spectator triangulates the relation between themselves, other audience members, the performer, and media, and extends towards humankind more generally. This triangulated relation elicits an identity-presence structure of the ‘for-us’.

In the following example we can see a movement from the singular ‘for-itself’ to the plural ‘for-us’ structure. Such a movement indicates another expression of receptive empathy and appears within the grammar of the language as it makes an immediate shift. The observation of the performer’s externalised inner being lifts from the particular “her” to the general “our”:

Always trapped within ~~her own~~ our concern to border “box in” “frame” [CI,G,6].

With an immediate shift to:

Always trapped within ~~her own~~ our concern to border “box in” “frame” [CI,G,6].

Also evident is a traversing movement between the “her” indication, the general “our”, and the “mine” “I” identity of the spectator:

Caught in the matrix—do I really know the patterns I create. Boxed—its following her [P2,G,4].

To conclude, it seems that the imperative of receptive empathy fulfills the desire of the spectator to transcend their normal embodiment (close or far) when:

- (i) the performer is involved in some hyper-movement with media:

The joyful, ecstatic, free, leaping [P1,E,2].

Go for gold! Jump for me. Do it more [P2,E,3].

I’m only bored towards the end—before the jumping [P4,E,6].

- (ii) the performer disengages from a specific interaction with the media:

Accept that self, resting smaller and quieter. The throbbing heart, so prominent and open and essential and overworked and undervalued and unheard [P2,E,3].

- (iii) the performer and media are in a non-interactive relation, and the attention of the writer is on the moving performer in either an:

- (a) I-conflation

Heart-beat throbs large, larger than life in this stillness. Is this my body? This throbbing spasmodic madness, life erupting [P1,E,1].

Or

- (b) Non I-conflation

He rolls—and balances. Rolls—and balances. And—splat I want to do that [P1,E,1].

Or when the spectator desires to transcend:

- (iv) media only, at points where the for-us structure in receptive empathy is indicated:

Dark dreams spill like turps dissipating pigment patches to the constraints of pigments tether—the grains split from monochrome homes. The binding is unstuck—thinners until as dust we float. The autonomy of particles. I-me-mine-it-the-is-your-you [P4,G,7].

As suggested at the beginning of this chapter, it was necessary to impose a limit to the discovery of more structures in the phenomenological analysis of the interactive relation experienced in the two public performances and self-devised installation. The work to date has elicited many insights into the relationship between bodies and performance technologies, and presented the opportunity to follow several diverse threads for future research. My forthcoming conclusion highlights the contributions my phenomenological aesthetics will make to a positive and constructive understanding of the crucial relation between bodies and new technologies within performance.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

My project is irreducible to a single conclusion. As Don Ihde suggests, the practice of phenomenology never ends (Ihde 1977, 153). If the phenomenologist faces their project's limit and becomes disheartened, they perhaps asked too much of phenomenology in the first place, or strayed from its path; perhaps they never even started.

There are, however, several conclusive threads to this research. My phenomenology has identified six interactive encounters between bodies, media and spectators, and examined the structural and modal constitution of interactions through a textual analysis of audience experiences. It will be my task in these conclusive notes to first, if only briefly, recapitulate the program of this research, and second, to reflect upon the essentials of phenomenological method as practised here before, in my final paragraphs, outlining two potential directions for future research towards which the results of my *Poetics of Reception Project* and methodology has pointed. I will end by commenting on the overall contribution that my research will make to the practice of phenomenology in performance studies.

Phenomenology is practised in many ways. In this thesis I have outlined the design of and demonstrated the working of one method for attending to the interactive relation between bodies and technologies in a performance context. I set out from a critical examination of Philip Auslander's claim that *there is no ontological distinction between live and mediatised forms because they participate in the same cultural economy*, and looked closely at the formation of his arguments against a background of media and communication theories (McLuhan, Bolter and Grusin *et al.*). Considering the various questions and issues raised by Auslander and proponents of liveness in the ongoing debate within performance studies about the relationship between live and mediatised forms, I reoriented the oppositional figuration of 'live *versus* mediatised' to the conjunction 'live *and* mediatised' with the explicit intention to examine audience experiences of bodies and media interacting during performance.

Through my reorientation of the debate, several discoveries were made, including the reinstatement of audience in a tripartite aesthetic understanding of an artwork. Drawing upon the work of Gadamer, my phenomenological aesthetics emphasises the role of audience (reception) as a player amongst other players—including artist and media (producers) and interactive artwork (product). I considered closely the practices of philosophical and scientific ontology in an attempt to spare my project from any more confusion surrounding ontological sameness or differences when examining these forms. By choosing to approach

the relationship between corporeal bodies and technological media in these events using a phenomenological aesthetics I was able to move beyond the ontological question, settling upon a Husserlian-style ontology through the disclosure of essential structures through eidetic analysis. Such a perspective makes irrelevant any deliberation regarding ontological sameness or difference. At a static-genetic level of constitutional analysis, my overall method has been informed by a Husserlian Transcendental Phenomenology. Moving beyond that level, I have drawn upon the methods of group phenomenology as practised in the tradition emerging from North America (Spiegelberg, Casey, Ihde and Steinbock), and Australia (Grant). Finally, I undertook a textual hermeneutics in order to arrive at some structural invariance within the poetic variance of writings that my phenomenological method elicited from participants. The writings from participants were phenomenologically reduced descriptions that attempted to suspend all presuppositions and critical evaluation. These texts, for the most part, were poetic expressions, imaginatively elaborating upon instances of interaction in performance. I identified six distinct interactive encounters from two pilot studies, two public performances, and one co-devised installation: (1) Digital Touch; (2) Moving with Digital Other; (3) Hybrids; (4) Transmorphing; (5) Environment; and (6) Expressing the Inner. From these six encounters, I distilled eight constitutive structures with varying modes of interactions that are essential to the relation between bodies and media in these performance events. These structures indicate the sense-formation of meaning at a spatial, temporal, linguistic and embodied level. Rather than recapitulate each in turn—for the previous section did so in great detail—the key question to answer here is: how do these constitutive structures and modes of interaction help us gain an understanding of the relation? The answer is in two parts. First, by revealing these becoming structures and modes, I was able to clarify a number of distinctions about the relationship between bodies and technologies, providing a sense of how these players in play (performer, media and audience) co-constitute meaning at, variously, a spatio-temporal level (dimensionality), at the grammatical level of language, in the formation and presence of identity, in the relations of action, and in the expressions of intercorporeal movements revealing the structure of kinesthesia in such contexts. Central to this study was the enactment of an embodied imagining as belief structure—that is, the suspension of disbelief within receptivity in order to co-constitute the many figurations of embodied imagination—and the role of description indicating modes of empathy in reception. My phenomenology has revealed at a structural level the sense formation of meaning in the interactive relation of bodies and media in

performance events. I like to think that each of the eight structures and their modes are leading clues pointing to further insights, deeper investigation and elaboration. This brings me to the second point. I believe that each thread of insight pursued from an open and intuitive examination of the phenomenologically-reduced texts led me to further possibilities for philosophical discussion and and/or engagement with my method in performance making. My methodological project has generated two such potential threads, each of which I plan to take up in post-doctoral research. Each emerged from my reflections upon the method, to which I will now turn.

Reflections on the Essentials of Phenomenological Method

From the outset, I declared that my *Poetics of Reception* project was a methodological one. At a time when phenomenology is blossoming in performance studies, cropping up amongst scholars and practitioners as the preferred approach to the analysis and understanding of performance phenomena, my project is a timely meditation upon and application of phenomenological theory to representational phenomena.¹⁷⁹ Notwithstanding the continuities between aesthetic performance and the performativity of everyday life, as a work of phenomenological aesthetics, this study advances no hyperbolic claim to describe life beyond the stage. As for the significance of the relationship between humans and computers in a performance context, the work uniquely discloses many structural modes of this relation not readily found in literature using other perspectives. My phenomenological method for performance conducted from within audience is an iterative framework that will continue to be refined in relation to its use and mode of inquiry. The following three points are further reflections upon specific problems inherent to my method. I was able to attend to most issues during the workshops.¹⁸⁰ I intend to revise my method for future use with these issues in mind:

¹⁷⁹ During the writing of this dissertation, I co-convoked the first International *time · transcendence · performance* conference held at Monash University, Melbourne, Australia in 2009 (mentioned in footnote X, pp. X). This has resulted in a co-edited publication with Stuart Grant currently being reviewed by Springer Publishers for their Contributions to Phenomenology Series. More recently I helped form the Association for Phenomenology in Performance Studies. APPS is an international body which preserves, supports and promotes phenomenology in the study and practice of performance and the use of performance in the practice of phenomenology. We take the terms phenomenology and performance in their broadest possible sense. The APPS website is forthcoming.

¹⁸⁰ See Chapter 6 “Phenomenological Method: a case of iterative design” for a more detailed assessment and reflection upon the method.

1) *Contamination within attunement in Task B*

The swapping and discussion of participants' accounts following Task A of the writing stage is a moment that Spiegelberg (and Casey) refer to as the attunement of linguistic accounts (Spiegelberg 1965; Casey 1997). During each workshop I sought attunement, but while subsequently conducting the textual analysis became suspicious of the procedure. Identifying discrepant terms that describe the same experience and then reducing those expressions to one shared term potentially contaminates the descriptive process. That is, as the group worked towards finding shared terms or words to describe a particular moment of interaction across accounts, rather than describing their singular, independent experience in the first place and seeing how it resonated or echoed in another's experience, individual participants risked adopting another's experience. Often it felt as though, because of a lapse in memory, the writer would draw upon another's written account to flesh out a gap. This might be legitimate if the writer is prompted to recall the event by another, but it is difficult to know whether in practice, in such instants, the writers were affirming their own experience, or that of another.

In any future application of the method, I will not concern myself with a second writing stage (as was the case with Task C). This was the case for our devised installation; Task B was omitted due to reasons other than a concern for the contamination of attunement, such as a change in format (experimenting with a script for mediatiation), and time constraints.

2) *Decay of Reproduction*

As noted in Chapter 6, a participant's inability to recall details of their experience in the later writing stages—the 'problem of immediacy'—is a difficulty that I attempted to overcome with bodily-based mnemonic devices. The embodied induction session before the writing stage, and the addition of a second induction prior to the performance to help with the phenomenological and attentional reductions, were strategies to deal directly with the inability to reproduce the former event in experience. However, the usefulness of such strategies was limited. When analysing phenomena in a one-off, isolated attendance to public performance, I realise that I have to accept that a 'decay in reproduction' will be an ongoing issue. Overall, results will be impoverished in these situations. There may be some potential to remedy such decay through a more developed use of these mnemonic devices, such as 'the revivification of an event', which is loosely based on hypnosis, where hypnosis is understood

as a form of highly focused attention. Equally, it may be that an increased experience in practising phenomenology and the development of new strategies revealed by further application of the method will help to address the problem of a decay in reproduction.

3) *Latent Textual Analysis*

The biggest issue with my method was starting the textual analysis too late. I waited to complete all workshops, holding off with the idea that more theoretical research was required to adequately undertake analysis. I proceeded with some hesitancy as there were no real examples to draw upon. Most of the literature discussing phenomenological methods did not offer detailed procedures for analysing texts. But as soon as I found a rhythm in the line-by-line analysis of participants' writings, it was relatively easy to ascertain the structural connections. For future projects I will conduct textual analysis immediately following the writing stage. With practice, I believe this could be conducted quite quickly. Immediate analysis will also lessen the decay of reproduction or false memories of the event to which the textual analyst also falls prey to. A consistent, veridical memory will contribute to a phenomenological process that moves us closer to the things themselves.

Phenomenology as Dramaturgy

Throughout this dissertation I have, on more than one occasion, made reference to phenomenology as digital dramaturgy. So far, this has been the richest implication of my *Poetics of Reception Project* as a methodology with practical utility within performance making. The basic premise is that phenomenology as a transcendental and eidetic practice works in much the same way as traditional dramaturgy: both share an interest in the essential structure of, in the case of phenomenology, the thing in itself, and for dramaturgy, the production or performance. Phenomenology identifies these structures through specific processes of disclosure while dramaturgy is open to varying processes conducted by a dramaturg to identify, create and construct a coherent structure. Dramaturgy, understood as the weaving of elements at a structural level could only benefit from employing a phenomenological method in their attentions to performance construction.¹⁸¹ Moreover, making the relationship between bodies and technologies in performance the relational

¹⁸¹ For more detail on this see Jodie McNeilly (2011 June). However, it is important to note that the findings from the textual analysis demonstrated in this paper version have been superseded by my analysis presented in Chapter 7.

phenomenon, the phenomenological work undertaken here directly lends itself to a dramaturgy of digital performance.¹⁸²

My script for mediatisation in the *Transmission Laboratories* installation was the first moment when I recognised the potential for phenomenology in dramaturgical work. The fact that I could control when (but not how) the interactions occurred, and where attentions should be directed (not without resistance), enabled me to see how a notational or recording system could operate in conjunction with phenomenological description.¹⁸³ A script for mediatisation could help build towards useful dramaturgical information, taking into account the material aspects of the production (media and set-up), the spatio-temporal relations between things (recorded as coordinates), and the receptivity of the experience (sense formation of meaning expressed through language and poetics).

During the final phase of my textual analysis, there were several moments in the disclosure of constitutive structures and modes of interaction that suggested dramaturgical devices for making. Such a dramaturgy could work backwards from, or contiguously with, the production process. If working backwards, the six interactive encounters identified in the *Poetics of Reception Project* would be an apposite starting point. For example, if there is a performance using screen projections combined with camera tracking, the results of any previous phenomenological work conducted on similar performances could be transposed. The dramaturg would begin to build an arsenal of devices to use in like situations. The phenomenological group working at the transcendental reduction phase—the suspension of presuppositions and critical value making—is open to a range of phenomena that are oriented toward dramaturgical concerns. One concern simply being: fluent interactions between a moving body and their projection on a screen (digital double). During the stages of a phenomenological and attentional reduction, and subsequent textual analysis, the emphasis can be on any phenomena, relational or otherwise. Of course there are certain limitations to phenomenology, such as knowing other people’s minds. At the level of empathetic reception, however, there is the possibility of resonating with the kinesthetic and existential dimensions of the performer in performance because these interpersonal dimensions are not deliberately

¹⁸² I do not want to rule out phenomenology as dramaturgy for all forms of performance. Future studies will address other forms.

¹⁸³ One participant is explicit about their discomfort with being told where to look and for how long.

Terrible like agony, agonizing disruption, oh dear, looking and not looking restrictions. Surprised by feeling suddenly agitated by this as a restriction [P7,TL,3].

hidden within performance. By and large, if the dramaturgy requires something other than the structure of an interaction, then the orientation of phenomenological regard can be directed towards that very thing.

The other approach to utilising the method would take place during the creative development and rehearsal stages of a production. In this case, the group phenomenologists would need to work ‘on the fly’ to provide immediate feedback to the dramaturg while the performance is being constructed.¹⁸⁴ The *decay of reproduction* may be less of an issue with this approach as the writing could occur almost simultaneously with the performance, which would also be repeated several times depending on when the dramaturgy team was invited to observe. My hope is to trial both approaches with a professional company and single group of trained phenomenologists over a three-year period.

Tiny Worlds Project: Constituting the miniature in kinesthesia. Embodied imagination in Husserl

My second thread for investigation stems from an encounter with the miniature in performance. This work derives directly from the phenomenological work undertaken in this dissertation, and will develop upon my methodology to consider other object-based aesthetic experiences. During encounters of the miniature (or tiny), the body is involved in an imagined movement of scale as it shrinks to become immersed in a simulated, though smaller, replica of our everyday proportionate reality. There are two untested theses that I am interested in pursuing with this research. The first is to see *how* and *when* we constitute the miniature in kinesthesia. An examination of the *how* requires a phenomenological examination of encounters using similar methods presented in this dissertation; the *when* is a little more tricky and speculative. Arguably our adult response and openness to tiny things has something to do with constituting meaningful structures in childhood experiences of the miniature—whether, as suggested earlier, these are toy-trains, sand castles, doll houses or genie bottles. Imagined scalar movements toward a shrunken embodiment of our entire bodily sensorium are somehow structurally retended from childhood, informing our kinesthetic experiences of the tiny. On this account, these inaugurating, transformative moments at a kinesthetic level continue to inform our encounters with the miniature. As children we shrink and are immersed in these tiny worlds. Do we as adults, *retroactively* constitute similar experiences during aesthetic encounters of the miniature, imaginatively

¹⁸⁴ Or to the director/choreographer if indeed the dramaturg is the lead phenomenologist.

feeling our tiny embodiment? Or is each new encounter a freshly constituted experience, with no retention of former structures? Some questions arising from the temporal nature of experiencing the miniature include: as adults, are these experiences felt to be stronger at an embodied level, and imaginatively richer, if we played with the miniature as children? Bereft of any childhood experiences of the miniature, how (if at all) does adult perception encounter the miniature? These are temporal questions inquiring into pre-rational embodied memory, and perceptual differences between generations.

Extrapolating from a constitutional analysis of perception, we could ask how such experiences impact upon our everyday spatio-temporal selves in relation to other objects, people and spaces in the world. Do we inhabit space differently after experiences of the miniature? What are the scalar differentials? How do we feel small/smaller, big, or bigger? What are the transformative kinesthetic dimensions of encountering the miniature? And finally, how could such aesthetic-based research inform studies relating to socio-ecological questions of how we dwell: do we need all that space?¹⁸⁵ And the kinesthetic constitution of body image: how small or big am I?

My second thesis, or orientation, involves a close study of Husserl's work on imagination understood through experiences of the miniature. I am interested in drawing together the key concepts of kinesthesia, motivation, apperception, and the laws of association (e.g. pairing) from Husserl's earlier work on self-temporalisation with his phenomenology of imagination (Husserl 2001, 2005). By tracing the relationship between kinesthesia and imagination in Husserl's manuscripts that deal with these aforementioned concepts, I wish to ask how these connections can deepen a reading of his transcendental aesthetic (the spatio-temporal aspects) and perhaps illumine the workings of an analytic for investigating the constitution of kinesthesia and imagination in encounters of the miniature (aesthetic and child's play) and other extreme encounters, like *monoliths*, found within nature and the built environment. By developing upon my *Poetics of Reception* methodology, such a study of extreme oppositional scale could, at the level of a transcendental aesthetic, reveal new or different aspects of an ego's relation to others (ethics), or provide a unique perspective on an ego's relation to earth (an eco-philosophy), that a psychological or anthropological reflection on egoic life would not.

¹⁸⁵ This is a leading question of the 'Tiny House' movement, which started and continues to flourish in the US.

To Conclude

My phenomenological examination of bodies interacting with technologies has hopefully contributed to a positive understanding of this relation. Rather than oscillating within the quagmire of debate that persecutes liveness through a denial of its existence (Auslander *et al.*), or critically demonising the role of mediatisation in the valorization of live performance (Phelan *et al.*), my study resisted making ontological distinctions and comparisons (only describing differences where an experience indicated) and sought to engage with the ontology of relations at the level of their essential structures and modes of constitution. These structures were understood through the receptive and embodied experiences of audience members engaged in a unique way of attending performance. It was through their rich poetic responses to these experiences that I was able to provide a number of insights into this relation between corporeal bodies and technological media, a complex relation that will continue to develop in the experiences of performer, audience member and performance maker alike.

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APPENDIX A

Poetics of Reception Revised Info-Pack for participants, May 2009, Transmission Laboratories, AV Studio, Department of Performance Studies, The University of Sydney, Australia.

A Poetics of Reception: phenomenological writings from within audience

Background to phenomenological method as practice

To undertake phenomenology as a practice is to actively become aware of your direct experience of phenomena. How does one become actively aware? In a phenomenological sense this involves the active ‘suspension’ of your usual prejudices or ready-made judgments about something you encounter in a particular context. It is to consider that thing or event ‘uncloaked’ of theoretical and conceptual conjecture. It is a method of ‘reduction’ that permits you to describe your access to an immediate and embodied experience in first-person detail. Paying attention in a phenomenological way asks you to develop a new attitude to understanding the world as experienced and to undertake a rigorous practice of reflection upon the structure of your consciousness. In a sense, the method employs the principles of meditation, but for very different results. Your role in this research project is to engage in the reduction, reflection processes for pre-reflection, and communication of your experience of selected phenomena in a performative context.¹

By fostering this ‘new attitude’, a phenomenological reduction operates to open our experience as lived toward the world in a primordial way, allowing us to see ‘things in themselves’. Herbert Spiegelberg said that “[t]he watchword “to the things themselves” has primarily a positive objective, bids us to turn toward phenomena which had been blocked from sight by the theoretical patterns in front of them”.²

The question is: what kind of phenomena are we concerned with for this project? During these workshops we will be investigating phenomena as they relate to aesthetic experience. For example: relationships between a live body and their screen presence or other visually projected material: streamed live or treated with effect and temporally and tempo-spatially manipulated; corporeal reversibility next to virtual immateriality; and touching on our perceptual structure: imaginings, memories and embodied responses bearing witness.

My dissertation aims to restore a proper ‘ontology’ to studies of the relationship between live and mediated forms in performance. I use a phenomenological approach to do this, drawing on the experiential data of select participants in a group situation. The data is produced through the imposition of a method that enables the participant to be open to the performance in a general way (macro attention); and more focused on specifically directed relations (micro attention). This experience is then recorded through the written word. First-hand accounts are also produced by reductive means by way of ‘constraints’ on writing technique.³ The distillation of *eidetic invariants* (*eidōs* or essences) initially occurs

¹ There are a number of different methods in use by Phenomenologists around the world. These methods tend to differ based on the phenomena under examination. As scientific as the approach may seem, my particular design permits the method to be both unfixated and iterative in nature. The method offers a supportive scaffold for embarking on the disclosure of aspects phenomenologically derived. It shifts with respect to the group participants involved over each session and developments that emerge from reflection on the utility of the framework itself.

² Spiegelberg, Herbert 1971 *The Phenomenological Movement: A Historical Introduction* Vol. 2 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff) p 658.

³ I draw loosely here on the French anti-Surrealist Group Oulipo and “The Workshop of Potential Literature”. The Oulipo believed that through mathematical constraints: *formules*, they could broaden literature as deep memory structure: “authors construct a mathematically engineered scaffolding before

in identifying the author's interest and the intersubjective elaboration of an aspect or aspects through concentrated group discussion. The content of this is treated to further analysis.

An Algorithm for first seeing:

Opening = bracketing + focusing

I remain open to what is happening, oriented towards its acceptance, my attention is organized around this acceptance.¹

Opening onto phenomena through restrictive means appears to be a contradiction in terms. Such an opening requires you ('the phenomenologist') during the performance and writing stages to **bracket** out preconceived judgment and conceptual figurations as a movement of intellectual and embodied suspension; while at the same time having a particular focus of attention or *active turn of regard*. These are discussed in turn.

What are we thinking about now? Bracketing.

The observer and writer must **bracket** out any judgments that may colour or close down their experience in a critical way. They must strive to break with their habitual view of the world and attempt to shut out preconceived opinions of every sort and consider at the most passive level of their experience the actual contents of the performance perceived in their immanent relationships with each other. The process of **bracketing** requires the phenomenologist to **actively suspend** prejudices in order to open onto the phenomena in a more intuitive way. This act of suspension can be understood as shelving regions of knowledge: putting those concepts and theoretical systems that help us account for our experiences in the world aside for the description of this immediate contact. A later writing stage permits pulling those concepts and theoretical systems back into the phenomenologically reduced account, thus, building up the thematisation from a direct, intersubjectively understood experiential basis.

What are we paying attention to? Focusing.

The purpose of this research project is to understand the relationship between certain phenomena – namely, live and mediated forms. These forms are to be specifically elaborated within a dance context. There are two levels of attention that require explanation. First, on a macro level, we have the entire palette of experience laid out before us in what is known (in Husserlian terms) as a *field of prominences*. We can enter a performance and have our attentions directed in a widened sense, permitting all the

¹ Depraz, Nathalie, Varela, Francisco J. and Vermersch, Pierre 2003 *On Becoming Aware: A pragmatics of experiencing* (Advances in Consciousness Research 43) (Amsterdam, The Netherlands: John Benjamin Publishing Co.).

prominences within that field to 'seduce' our attentions.¹ We shall call this **Level One: General Attention**. It is necessary to pass through level one on the way to more directed attention. A participant who does not go beyond having their attentions open toward the *every expanse of their presence* is operating in *general attention*: the buzzing of a speaker; the cornices of the theatre ceiling; the heavy breathing of an audience member sitting behind; the rubbing of my shoe on an unhealed blister; the shopping list; memory of my mother pegging clothes on the washing line; or the way the dancer heaves and trembles as they draw downstage. For first time participants, having such widened attentions, bracketing, and examining your embodied consciousness is often enough. The radical and rigorous nature of phenomenology as a method for attaining knowledge, which asks you to forgo knowledge in order to get back to things themselves, is a complex task requiring practice. Often obsessive thoughts, distractions, or a general 'dislike' of a show can leave the most seasoned phenomenologist grappling at this level.

Once the participant is feeling comfortable they can attempt **Level Two: Selected Attention**. This requires a more micro-level of attention, where particular relations are focused upon and prioritized in the experience. I feel it is a necessary reduction in my method given there is little opportunity to consider the phenomena – live and mediated forms – in public performance. If participants operate at a general level, the performance (dull or delightful) may distract them from opening onto the phenomena in question. However, if the bracketing is both rigorous and sustained, attending to the performance will be equally focused.

The **temporalising structure** of our perceiving consciousness is also important. By paying attention to the constitution of phenomena in embodied consciousness through our perceptions and the related myriad of memories, imaginings, and expectations, we are mapping the temporalising aspect of what it is to *be-there-with* at a performance event. This is paramount to understanding the ontology of the artwork in its receptive constitution, which my overall research intends, in part, to disclose.

So in focusing upon the experience in a phenomenological way, we are either paying attention in a widened sense (Level One); refining our attentions to consider only select relations (Level Two); switching between both levels; and examining the temporalising structure of our own consciousness: memories that we have, particular imaginings, and certain expectations that are affected by the experience as it is directly attended to.

Embodiment and Emotions

Bracketing does not prevent us from modes of feeling, both physical and emotional. It questions how and what is affecting these states. Ensuring that the experience itself is responsible for the tingling goose bumps on the skin, or the tears that glisten in our eyes. Our postural disposition in acts of audiencing is a bodily comportment of being faced toward the performance as a seeing, hearing, eviscerating, thinking, imagining, reminiscing (perhaps even dozing) audience member in active reception. What is going on with our embodiment as we perceive the stage/performance area contained of elements - both live and virtual - in complex relationships of performative play? Keeping these following questions as a guide in mind is useful:

¹ An excellent guide to the role of attention in a phenomenological case study of rock climbing is found in Steinbock, Anthony J 2004 "Affection and Attention: On the Phenomenology of Becoming Aware" *Continental Philosophy Review*, 37, pp. 21-43.

- 1) How does an awareness of my body enter into the content of my conscious experience? What are the phenomenal cues? How can I describe them?
- 2) At what points during the performance am I aware or unaware of my own embodied experience?
- 3) Is being aware of my embodiment a case of felt 'sensation'? Where is this situated?
- 4) How do I visualise my body during aesthetic receptivity?
- 5) Where am I temporally? What memories, expectations or imaginings am I having in relation to embodied awareness while attending as audience? Can I describe my embodied self-temporal style?
- 6) How does a live body performing affect my embodiment?
- 7) How does a virtual/screen body or image affect my embodiment?

Considering the interkinaesthetic dimensions: the affect between bodies live and virtual, we can ask:

- 8) What aspects of the live performer in their movement and potential movement affect my movement and my imagined movement?
- 9) What aspects of the screen/virtual performer in their movement and potential movement affect my movement and imagined movement?
- 10) What aspects of the relationship between live bodies and screen/virtual mediated elements in their movement and potential movement affect my movement and imagined movement?

Communication: What and how do I write?

All one needs to do is to describe what they see, feel hear, dream, remember, think and imagine. As long as this is done with openness toward phenomena (i.e. avoid writing about reactions based on how we liked/disliked a performance), the written accounts will be a useful tool for inquiring into the being of phenomena (their ontology) in a rigorous phenomenological way. Through simple description we can get closer to the 'things in themselves' if our language undergoes some form of reduction through applied constraints. Phenomenological description is difficult and appears to undermine the notion of approaching phenomena from a 'pre-predicative' place. "A description presupposes a framework of class names, and all it can do is to determine the location of the phenomenon with regard to an already developed system of classes".¹ However, as Spiegelberg notes, it is possible that a new language exists which allows the phenomenological description to "serve as a reliable guide to the listener's own actual or potential experience".² During the workshop you will be guided in the technique of generative writing: interpretative writing from an experiential basis. A new **poetics of reception** is purportedly established by working towards a phenomenologically treated language of *being-there-with* as audience.

¹ Spiegelberg, Herbert 1971 *The Phenomenological Movement: A Historical Introduction* Vol. 2 (The Hague: Martinuss Nijhoff) p. 673.

² Ibid.

The following two samples of writings are from participants written during 'Task One' of the generative writing process. They were asked to describe the performance just attended, holding back on interpretation (making meaning), grammar, judgments of like and dislike, logical connectives or arguments such as: if x then y, x therefore y, e.t.c. The language and style in both accounts differ dramatically, however, they both produce phenomenologically reduced data for further analysis. This will give you an idea of how you might write. Despite imposed constraints, the writing is freed (arguably through constraint) from the unnatural bonds of our systematic language systems.

Let the words issue forth without judgment

Sample one

Ombeba – escher world – fall into the black vertigo – precision spinning. But present face and energy – Longing to watch and feel and do and feel along with him

Play of balance –stretching out stick future is still human

Fluid jump joy of Being caught at the moment, time and time again, the trick of it

Spreading out in an advance/primitive gait

The Helix... The H the skeleton of technology – taking over the Body of senses – sliding into the second skin pop out of the physical form

The other's world his to investigate

(2007 P2, GA)

Sample Two

As he twisted along the white passageways of light, spinning his body head to toe, to head and then his body cutting across the lines and then flipping, he moved as if he were not a person, but a body creating some state. The flip of his body brought an audible inbreath from the audience. Nearing a gasp. When the light warmed, a soft yellow, the sound also became more human. Not an electronic sound, but perhaps a guitar and melody. Arms and legs stuck out at an awkward angle, and moving as if in choreography with one another. Like synchronized dancers. Again, this sense of disconnect from the head.

(2007 P1, GB)

Doing phenomenology is a strange and often complicated undertaking. It demands breaking down our habitual modes of experiencing and taken for granted systems for understanding the world. Phenomenology is practised differently across disciplines. What has been most significant about using group based phenomenology as a methodological tool in considering performance phenomena is that it changes in relationship to the individuals participating; the event as marked by the phenomena; and the writing and thinking produced from engaging in this mode or style of inquiry.

I appreciate your involvement and look forward to your writing and questions in relation to our shared experiences as we attempt to lay bare their structures.

Jodie